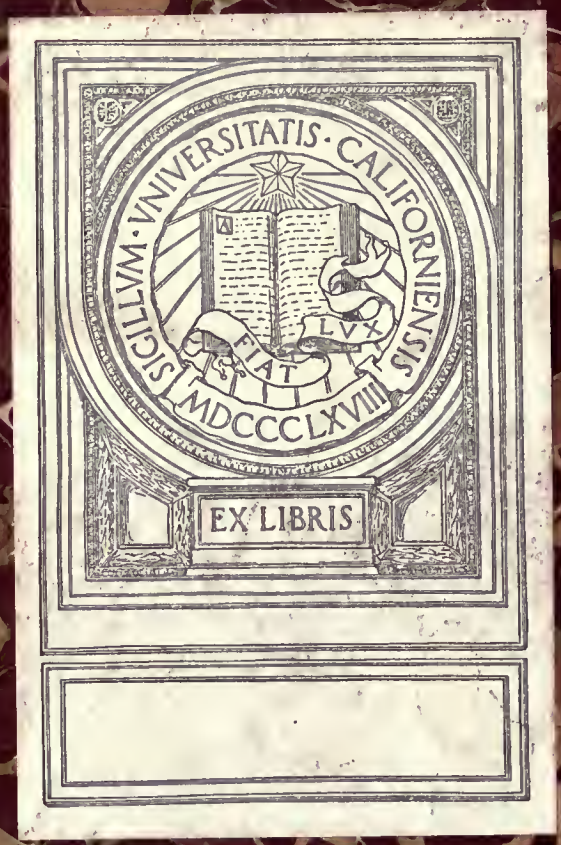
PEG WOFFINGTON

BY

AUGUSTIN DALY


SIGILLVM · VNIVERSITATIS · CALIFORNIENSIS
MDCCCLXVIII
FIAT
LVX
EX LIBRIS

neatly unattached.

2.3/

MARGARET WOFFINGTON as "SIR HARRY WILDAIR."

FROM A PAINTING BY WM. HOGARTH.

IN THE POSSESSION OF AUGUSTIN DALY.

WOFFINGTON

A TRIBUTE TO THE ACTRESS AND THE WOMAN

BY

AUGUSTIN DALY

WITH

PHOTOGRAVURE ILLUSTRATIONS

(SECOND EDITION)

PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR
BY
NIMS AND KNIGHT
TROY N. Y.

PRESS OF
N. Y. PHOTO-GRAVURE CO.,
137 W. 23RD ST.,
NEW YORK.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

The information that a new edition of his work has become a necessity is exceedingly gratifying to an Author, and in this case it is no drawback to his satisfaction to believe that the subject of the book is what has proved its attraction.

Writers find one of their pleasures in the assurance that they have in some way, whether in the way they intended or not, hit the public fancy; and the triumph of bookmakers is in having selected subjects about which the world is eager to know.

But in collecting from many sources all that is recorded of the life and doings of Mistress Margaret Woffington, and putting it into one volume with my personal tribute to the memory of so conscientious a public servant, I had no expectation of producing a book which would prove interesting to all classes of readers; nor had I, (as in my managerial exertions I always do have) the purpose of making every effort to secure the popular favor; so I cannot plume myself upon the selection of subject, nor the art of treating it. I set out to write from a full heart all that the moving story of Woffington inspired. I did not choose the subject:—it chose me;—and if the selection of the pen is crowned with success, and the much loved—much maligned—much praised—and greatly blamed woman, has found a biographer satisfying in any degree—let us acknowledge again the power that Peg Woffington exercises a century after she has passed away, rather than award any particular credit for the success of this memoir to

Augustin Daly

New York December 3d, 1890.

A Table of the Plates.

Woffington as Sir Harry Wildair, . . . Frontispiece.

Her Earliest Portrait, ... Facing page 13

Woffington's first Interview with Manager Rich, " " 21

Margaret Woffington in 1740, . . . " " 38

Woffington and Shuter in the Merry Wives, . " " 44

Woffington as Mrs. Ford, ... " " 56

Woffington in 1745, ... " " 65

Phœbe, ... " " 77

Susanna Maria Cibber, ... " " 97

As the Female Volunteer, ... " " 112

Woffington in her Prime, ... " " 124

From a Painting in the Kensington Gallery, . " " 135

Her Last Portrait, ... " " 145

The Woffington Almshouses, . . . " " 150

Fac-Simile of Her Autograph, . . . " " 152

The Little Church in Teddington, . . . " " 153

The Tablet in Teddington Church, . . . " " 154

Fac-Simile of the first and only Memoir of Mrs. Woffington, ... " " 165

Fac-Simile of Playbill of Woffington's Last New Part, Facing page 172

A Table of Chapters.

		PAGE
By way of Prologue,		1
Period I.	From the Cradle to the Tight-rope,	5
" II.	From Lilliput to Ophelia,	13
" III.	From Aungier Street to Covent Garden,	21
" IV.	From Covent Garden to Drury Lane,	30
" V.	From the Thames to the Liffey,	38
" VI.	From House-drawing to House-keeping,	44
" VII.	From Peace to Rupture,	56
" VIII.	From Contest to Contest,	65
" IX.	From Stage to Drawing-room,	77
" X.	From the Frying-pan into the Fire,	82
" XI.	From Poets to Critics,	97
" XII.	From Teddington to Smock Alley,	112
" XIII.	From Clubs to Firebrands,	124
" XIV.	From Bellamy to Wilkinson,	135
" XV.	From Life to Death,	145

Addenda.

I.	List of Parts acted by Woffington,	160
II.	Woffington's Ghost,	165
III.	A Monody to Woffington's Memory,	167
IV.	Index,	173

BY WAY OF PROLOGUE.

I HAVE set myself a pleasant task: to call a closer attention, than has heretofore been given, to one bright figure in the throng of beautiful and clever women who rise up before us when we give a thought to the stage and its favorites in the Eighteenth Century.

The lovable woman I write of was the pet of countless audiences, the star of numberless brilliant performances, and the first topic of every tongue, in the days of her glory—a little over a century and a quarter ago.

She had sonnets written in her praise; she was the subject of a thousand floating paragraphs in the papers of her time; of much idle gossip in society; of more than one malevolent memoir; and is the heroine of modern romance and story—and yet there is not a really authentic biography of her in print.

My purpose is to set this figure before you in its true proportions; to fix the identity of this visionary face; to catch the glance and smile of this popular favorite; to write down everything that is obtainable of her true history; to walk with her; talk with her; applaud her as she trips out before the footlights; watch her achieve one of those marvellous triumphs over strange

audiences, and over audiences rendered even indifferent—from confidence in her powers and familiarity with them; to condole with her when she meets her reverses; unite in the cheers which salute her renewed successes, and at last see the curtain fall upon the scene full of movement and glitter, yet tinged with tragedy, in which she played her brilliant part.

There was a special charm for me in the name of Peg Woffington long before I found her idealized in Charles Reade's novel; and I wondered why no writer had done for her what Cunningham has done for Nell Gwynne or Boaden for Dora Jordan; and that not one word painter had given us even such an outline of her as we possess of Nance Oldfield. Thackeray has outlined her during the last year of her stage life: still it is only a stroke of the pen which he gives. But invented episodes and manufactured conversations are not needed to picture Margaret Woffington for us. The newspapers and the letters of her lifetime will paint the portrait, and from these I shall select, as it were, my brushes and colors.

Turn to what page you will in the stage history of the middle of the last century you must come upon the name of "Mrs. Woffington."

I found her particularly *present* when I turned to the memoirs of bygone managers for consoling parallels to my own occasional disappointments in the defection of some restless member of my company, or in the dismaying indifference of the public to some of my favorite performances; and found myself wondering whether ill success is due to special circumstances, or is inseparable from the managerial career at regularly recurring periods.

I found the large-hearted and clear-headed Woffington always faithful to the management of the theatre in which she was engaged; consulting the

interests of the public rather than listening to the promptings of vanity, or to the injudicious flattery of friends. Never would she disappoint an audience, or abet an insurrection against the orderly administration of the theatre. I find her in London, and in Dublin also, when at the very apex of public admiration, surrendering leading parts in plays and accepting seconds to lesser performers.* She was rewarded for all this by a popularity which has never been surpassed in the history of the stage.

Why has not her career been the subject of a volume worthy of her in the past? Perhaps it is because the triumphs of the heroines of comedy do not stimulate the efforts of serious biographers—for biographers are a serious lot. At all events the tragedians have had a larger share of the attention of these serious writers. The laughter-loving goddesses of the stage are, perhaps, too light and fleeting for their heavy pens. Yet turn where we may, we shall find a deep tragedy in the lives of these daughters of Momus. Mirth will fill the eyes with tears as soon as grief will—and sometimes the drops that gaiety has engendered turn with the suddenness of lightning to streams from an overcharged heart. But the real tragedy is in this: that all conscientious acting exhausts the performer, and that this is especially true of the best comedy acting; for the naturalness demanded in comedy taxes the resources of genius to the utmost—the art of concealing art being there necessarily required in perfection. It is certain that the arduous nature of comedy acting has been too frequently underestimated. The tragic actor who fumes and frets and struts and bellows forth his passion has absolutely not exhausted himself

---

* *The Dublin Gazette, 1753, has this cast:—Jane Shore, Miss Ward; Alicia, Miss Woffington.*

half so much as the comedian, who, with ease and naturalness, has just charmed us, and whose art appears so simple and so light and facile. The labor of repression in his case has been doubly as exhausting as the work of the tragedian, with all his apparent effort.

In preparing this book I have disregarded the often malicious pictures in early pamphlets relating to Mrs. Woffington, as well as the later more fanciful portraiture of Molloy. I am going to try and give the fair and womanly creature as the brief chronicles of the press and the letter-writers in her life-time presented her from day to day and year to year; to show the child—the girl—the woman, as she was seen by the public in her own time; and to endeavor, by catching the reflections from the many glasses that mirrored her in every step of her career, to present her in all the lights in which we view the players who live and move before us.

PERIOD I.

FROM THE CRADLE TO THE TIGHT-ROPE.

A HUNDRED and seventy-five years ago there were several playhouses in Dublin in which the drama was rendered with a considerable degree of merit, and the Irish capital was looked upon as only second to London in importance as a theatrical centre. Indeed, as the maker and unmaker of theatrical reputations and fortunes, the Dublin audience held quite the balance of power until very recent years.

In the first quarter of the Eighteenth Century the principal playhouse in Dublin was the Theatre Royal in Aungier Street, then the centre of the aristocratic trading quarter, now, in this last quarter of the Nineteenth Century, given over to shops of semi-gentility, and visited by strangers only when in search of the tablet and niche with its petty bust of Tom Moore, which mark the house where the poet was born. At the "Theatre Royal" plays were set and acted with an elaboration of detail, cleverness and ability which were looked upon at that period as the highest achievements of talent. Four brothers by the name of Elrington were chief favorites in the company, of whom many excellent records have been left by the writers and historians of the period,* who have described them as the admiration of the opposite sex and the envy of their own. The Smock Alley Theatre came next to the Aungier Street house in popular esteem, but did not dispute its superiority. In fact, Smock Alley Theatre was at that time quite the "old"

* *Hitchcock's View of the Irish Stage, Vol. I, p. 96.*

house, and in more or less dilapidated condition, while that in Aungier Street had been but recently opened. But, though the Theatre Royal, with the Elrington brothers* as prime magnets, was patronized by "the Castle" and the fashionable circles of Dublin society, Smock Alley was held in equal favor by the middle classes, who were satisfied to accept a less dignified style of the drama in their old and favorite theatre, and were not so fastidious about the merits of the company.

In addition to these greater playhouses there were several more modest ones in which various kinds of entertainment were offered; and each theatre enjoyed such a degree of support from its adherents that Dublin was looked on at the time as second only to London in its appreciation of the pleasures offered by the Stage.

Among the less pretentious, yet not less popular, of these minor establishments was a little band-box of a place situated in Fawnes' Court, just off College Green, which had been opened by a Frenchwoman named Violante, who had come to Ireland about 1720. She was the sole manager and chief performer in a company of rope-dancers and tumblers which she had brought across the channel as a novelty to please the Dublinites. Lee Lewes and Hitchcock both describe the difficulties which Madame Violante encountered in seeking an opening for her performances, which, I suppose, may be classified as the variety entertainment of the period. The existing theatres were all occupied, and playing to such good business that she could hire none of them for her exhibition. The enterprising Frenchwoman speedily got out of this quandary by fashioning a theatre for herself. She engaged a large house fronting on Fawnes' Court, and which had formerly been occupied as a residence by Lord Chief Justice Whitchal. The yard or garden in the rear of

---

** Both Lewes and Hitchcock agree in praise of these Elringtons. The famous Thomas Elrington was regarded as unsurpassed in robust roles, and his creation of Busiris and Langa were never attempted by other actors with a success equivalent to that which had marked the original performance. Francis Elrington, the second brother, was alike celebrated for his old men, and no actor, it was believed, could surpass the excellence of his Sir Francis Gripe. The third brother, Ralph, was noted for his careful and conscientious acting, but had no especial reputation in any particular part; while the youngest brother of the talented family played lovers, boys and fine gentlemen with so pleasing a grace that he was at once the admiration and the envy of the two sexes.*

the house, with an opening off the parlor or drawing-room floor, was commodious enough to be especially adapted for the reception of a great number of people, and Violante hired carpenters and set them at once to work covering this space, and converting it into a species of booth and theatre combined. Her business enterprise aroused the curiosity of the town. Before a month was over she had opened the old mansion house in its new shape, and the first night it was thronged with people desirous to see the novelties she had advertised so uniquely. The strange entertainment, we are to presume, tickled the fancy of the gentry of Dublin highly. From the various records of the period it would seem that Madame Violante's bill was a foretaste of the modern music hall programme. Very soon after her arrival in Dublin she had attained enough prominence to be mentioned in Swift's letters and referred to in his celebrated defence of Lord Carteret.*

The Frenchwoman possessed an excellent reputation, not only for professional talent, but for exemplary character, and before long became much of a favorite in all circles. Indeed, she seems to have been a person of varied accomplishments. In addition to maintaining a reputation for managerial acuteness, she was renowned as a performer who danced with much sprightliness on the tight-rope, and made a passage from one extremity of her cord to the other, with a basket tied to each foot and a baby in each basket.†

---

* *John, Lord Carteret and Earl Granville, was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland between 1724–1730, having accepted that painful preferment in order to avert the utter disgrace which Walpole had intended for him, in his ingenious revenge for Carteret's cabal with the Brodericks in the coinage case and the Wood's patent. It was in defending Carteret against the further humiliations contemplated by Lord Orford that Swift sarcastically wrote: "I have not heard whether any care has hitherto been taken to discover whether the Italian rope dancer, Violante, be a whig or tory in her principles, or even that she has ever been offered the oath by Government: on the contrary I am told that she openly professes herself to be a highflyer, and it is not improbable that by her outlandish name she may also be a Papist in her heart: yet we see this illustrious and dangerous female openly preferred by principal persons of both parties, who contribute to her support in a splendid manner without the least apprehension of a grand jury, or even from Squire Hartly Hutchinson himself—that zealous prosecutor of hawkers and libels. And as Hobbes wisely observes, so much money being equivalent to so much power, it may deserve considering with what safety such an instrument of power ought to be trusted in the hands of an alien (Violante) who has not given any legal security for her good affection to the Government."—Swift's "Vindication of Lord Carteret."*

† "*Mackliniana*"—*European Magazine, May, 1800.*

One of the babies that thus unwittingly came before those audiences as a public performer was the child of John Woffington, a journeyman bricklayer of Dublin. He was a sober, industrious, honest man, who worked steadily at his trade and earned enough wages by it, we are told, to maintain his household in some degree of comfort. His wife was a good looking, shrewd woman, of the same class in life as her husband, a thrifty housekeeper who managed their little income so well that the humble cottage in George's Lane (?), near Dame Street, in which they lived, was a home of content and happiness. They were married, as near as we can judge, some time in the latter part of the year 1717, and had two children: Margaret, born October 18th, 1718, and Mary, who was, at the time of Peggy's *debut* in the basket, a babe at the breast.*

From such scanty information as I can gather regarding John Woffington, he was a man of but ordinary intelligence, with neither the ability to raise himself in his trade, nor ambition or reflection enough to exchange it for something better; but his wife was frugal, and by the practice of economy was enabled to lay by a small sum for emergencies. The emergency soon came. In the Spring of 1720, John Woffington was seized with a fever. But, with the prejudice against medical aid not uncommon among poor people, he refused to be attended by a doctor. For a month or so he lingered with the disease, but died in 1720, before the summer had well begun, leaving his wife unprovided for. His illness had exhausted the trifling sum laid by, and when her husband died, Mrs. Woffington was not only penniless, but in debt.† The expenses of the funeral were borne by the parish in which the Woffington's lived, and the widow with her infant children was left in abject poverty.

Thus cast upon her own resources, and being a strong, healthy woman, the widow took in washing. For some months she was enabled in this way to support herself and her two children. Her kindly neighbors, however, took a charitable interest in her welfare, and lent the widow enough money to start

---

* *Hitchcock's View of the Irish Stage, Vol. I, p. 47.*
† *Hitchcock, Vol. I.*

a small huckster's shop in the poorest part of Ormond Quay. Here she struggled for a while to earn a livelihood, but the profits of the business were meagre, and Mrs. Woffington had neither experience enough to avoid bad debts nor capital to recover from them. Before the year was out she was dispossessed for non-payment of rent, and forced to sell water-cress on the streets for subsistence.* It is at this juncture that little Margaret Woffington enters upon the scene for the first time.

Engaged by the Frenchwoman, Violante, for the culminating act of her tight-rope performance, in which she was advertised to carry two babies in baskets attached to her feet, John Woffington's eldest orphan became one of the babies in the basket, and in this way helped to increase her mother's scanty income. With the younger infant in her arms the widow went through the busy streets of Dublin calling her humble vegetables, and stopped after the performance was over to bring Peggy home.†

From these lowly circumstances came two women who, in maturity, occupied much of the world's attention: the one, famous for her wit, grace and beauty; the other, celebrated in being her lovely and fashion-courted sister: for the infant in arms is Mary Woffington (named after her mother), who in later life became the Honorable Mrs. Cholmondeley.

Before little Peggy's second season on the stage, or, rather, in the basket, had well begun, Madame Violante's receipts from her theatre began to decrease. A performance that pleases the senses only by marvels of physical skill and offers nothing to interest the mind, cannot long remain popular. The people of Dublin grew weary of tumbling and dancing and feats of agility. They deserted the Frenchwoman as quickly as they had accepted her, and steadily refused to be tempted by new tricks in pantomime or fresh wonders on the tight-rope. Madame Violante accepted the inevitable. She left Dublin with her company and went to Scotland, where her performances met with varying success. The departure of the acrobats, of course,

---

* *"Macklíniana"—European Magazine, May, 1800. Private MS. of Macklin given by Mr. Dame to Garrick Club. Taylor's Records, Vol. I, p. 324. Lee Lewes' Memoirs, Vol. I.*

† *Private Collection of Newspaper Clippings in possession of Mr. Thomas J. McKee,*

lost the child of the basket her engagement. But little Peggy did not remain long idle. As soon as she could toddle unsupported through the streets, she was sent out by her mother to sell water-cress. For some three or four years the child wandered through the town, barefoot and clad in rags, crying "All this fine young salad for a ha'penny, all for a ha'penny, all for a ha'penny here."* The little one's frequent visits to College Green attracted the notice and kindly interest of the young gentlemen of the University, who were delighted by her pretty face and aptness of repartee. They bought her water-cress regularly, and did much by their kindly patronage to keep the child in comfort and good spirits. One of little Peggy's duties at the end of her daily routine was to fetch a pitcher of water from the Liffey to her mother.† The road to the river passed a house in George's Street in which Madame Violante was now living. The Frenchwoman had returned to Dublin for some time after the failure of her speculation in Scotland and England, and was engaged in forming a company of children to present the latest London craze, Gay's "Beggars' Opera," in the George's Lane Theatre.‡

Peggy was at this time ten years old, and as she tripped past the French-woman's window, with her water-jar on her head, probably caught the foreigner's quick eye, and was soon secured for the troupe of "Lilliputians," as Violante later advertised her juvenile actors. Little Woffington's graceful carriage, her winsome face, and her aptitude for dancing and general altertness soon made

---

* *Memoirs of Lee Lewes, Vol. II.* † *Lee Lewes.*

‡ *Davies' Life of Garrick, p. 346.* —— *Davies speaks of Violante's second theatre as being in George's Lane. George's Street was, probably, the site of Violante's booth. George's Street, which may have been a "Lane" before its improvements, has recently been widened, and one-half of the houses having gone the way of all bricks and mortar, are replaced by the facade of a handsome market. Opposite this many of the old houses of Woffington's time still stand, and from here run two narrow courts, one called George's Avenue and the other George's Place. One of these blind alleys must be the George's Lane which is mentioned as the home of John Woffington and the place of Peggy's birth. They are narrow, side-walkless culs de sac, lined on either side with low, cleanly, white-washed cabins—scarcely houses—which remain now (1886) as they must have stood in Woffington's time;—and in these outlines one might trace the design of the Woffington Cottages for the poor, erected at Teddington in 1760. The houses in George's Avenue are the humble abode of clean but certain poverty to-day, as they must have been a hundred and sixty years ago.*

her the favorite of her mistress above all her juvenile troupe.* This Frenchwoman must have been a manager of great discernment, since for the company of "Lilliputians" she had judgment enough to select several children whose later career proved her shrewdness. The afterward celebrated Isaac Sparks made his first appearance as *Peachum* in this performance of "The Beggars' Opera." The no less celebrated Bensley was introduced as *Lockit;* Barrington, who became quite popular in low comedy, was *Filch,* and Betty Martin made her first bow before the public, under Madame Violante's direction, as *Captain Macheath.* Peggy was the *Polly* of the cast.

We read that little Peggy carried herself gracefully, was free from nervousness, and danced in such a sprightly manner that her cleverness was a general theme of talk among her audiences.† Her bright and attractive face and the precocious intelligence displayed in her acting immediately gained for her a place in popularity that none of her young rivals could dispute.

I dwell upon this fact of Woffington's precocity, to which Hitchcock, as well as all who have written of her at this period of her career testify, not because stage precocity is a rarity, or ever has been, but because one may number on the fingers of a single hand the bright stars who realized in maturity the talents of which they gave evidence in infancy. Leontine Fay upon the French stage, Kate Bateman upon our own, and Jean Davenport (later known as Mrs. General Lauder—but earlier identified with Dickens' "Infant Phenomenon") and Clara Fisher Maeder,‡ known equally well to the English and American stage, are as many as I can remember at present. Master Betty's fire went out with his boyhood. To be sure, we know that Mrs. Kendall and Ellen Terry both acted as children and are now bright

---

* *O'Keefe's Recollections, Vol. I, p. 16.*

† *European Magazine, January, 1795.*

‡ *This remarkable woman, who charmed our grandfathers by her precocity, is yet alive (1887), and, O fate of greatness, is playing the principal "old women," or, to be less technical, parts similar to those created by our own rare Mrs. Gilbert, on the New York Stage, and is hale and hearty, though acting in "one night stands" with one of the traveling theatrical companies annually making the tour of this country.*

lights of our dramatic era, but they do not come within the category of infantile phenomena as the others do, and, more prominently than all others, Margaret Woffington.

In her case there was plenty of talent among her juvenile associates to stimulate and assist her childish ambition. With a rivalry of merit so great, the little performer was sure of incentive; and to be brief, this performance of the "Beggars' Opera" was so positive a success, and drew such crowded houses, that the popularity of Violante's booth gave rise to great alarm in the other theatres. The actors of Smock Alley, probably being more affected than those of the higher house by the popularity of the "Lilliputians," petitioned the Lord Mayor to interpose his authority and forbid the performances at the new playhouse on the ground that "they interfered with the business" of the older ones. This he strangely consented to do, and immediately issued an order closing the Frenchwoman's establishment.

The people of Dublin were highly incensed at the injustice done to their favorite juveniles, and through the interest of several a new theatre was hastily built in Rainsford Street, outside the jurisdiction of the Lord Mayor, and situated on the property of the Earl of Meath, a nobleman who had shown great interest in the little players. Here the "Lilliputians" were formally installed in the year 1729, and the opera resumed with its former success.*

In the new house more of the gentry began to attend, and some of the leading spirits of the Theatre Royal, in their search for fresh talent, commenced to take note of the more clever juveniles of Violante's theatre. Lee Lewes says the Elrington brothers, of whom mention has already been made, took especial interest in little Peggy: afforded her frequent *entree* to their playhouse, gave her a serviceable knowledge of the mechanics of acting, practiced her in elocution, and did much to strengthen the child's growing ambition.

---

* *Hitchcock's Irish Stage, Vol. II.*

HER EARLIEST PORTRAIT.

PERIOD II.

FROM LILLIPUT TO OPHELIA.

ENCOURAGED by the Elringtons, Peggy's thoughts of the stage became more definite, and Madame Violante, wisely recognizing the bent of her little protége's talent, had her instructed in such parts as *Phillida* and others of that kind. This favor was rewarded some time later by Peggy's great success as *Nell* in "The Devil to Pay." In attempting this character Peggy was much aided by its author, Charles Coffey, an ingenious schoolmaster of Dublin, the originator of a great many clever conceits in literature. He was a poet of some merit in his day, as well as the author and composer of "The Beggars' Wedding," an opera of sprightly humor and excellent music, written in the spirit of and as a sequel to Gay's work, but being wholly of local interest it was never attempted outside of Dublin. The fine comedy part in "The Devil to Pay" had already largely helped to make the reputation of Miss Raftor, afterward the celebrated Mrs. Clive, yet Coffey was so gratified at Peggy's intelligent study of *Nell* that he declared she had done as much to make the character as he had.

He also offered his services to teach Peggy every stroke of acting that had been applauded in Miss Raftor; and the interest thus begun in the young actress led to important results for her. Mr. Coffey persuaded the elder Elrington (who was at that time chief manager) to take Peggy into the company of the Theatre Royal. Thomas Elrington* had already entertained the idea, and the engagement was soon made. In 1733, Margaret Woffington, then in her fifteenth year, was regularly engaged at the Aungier Street Theatre as

---

* *This one of the Elrington brothers is said to have alternated parts with Barton Booth at Drury Lane. He was noted for his loud voice (quite the McCullough of his time, probably), which, it is said, he was quite boastful of as being strong enough "to be heard all over the Blind Quay, when," as he said, "you couldn't hear Quin or Mossop outside the Theatre." Tom Elrington died in 1732.*

an actress of the legitimate drama, and on February 12th of the following year* appeared for the first time on that stage as *Ophelia.*

This precocity need not astonish us. We have had *debutantes* in our own day who have begun as stars at fifteen, in *Juliet.* Where they've finally "brought up" I shall not try to explore. In Woffington's time women were still more or less of a novelty on the English stage, and extreme youth was no drawback for the new aspirant to dramatic honors. Besides, I have no doubt, Peg at sixteen was a well-developed girl.

Lee Lewes tells us that in the last years of her engagement with Violante, so valuable and popular did Peggy become that the Frenchwoman raised her salary frequently, until finally it reached the extraordinary sum of thirty shillings a week. Nevertheless, insignificant as the amount may look in our eyes, it was a figure only reached by adult players of positive ability. Peggy carried every penny of it to her mother, and Hitchcock tells us she even surrendered to the parental purse the extra *douceurs* frequently thrown her by her audiences when she had executed sometimes more gracefully than at others a favorite step in her dances.

The Theatre Royal engagement did not increase Peg's salary. But under the judicious management and care of the surviving Elringtons she gained a great deal of experience in the drama and a better knowledge of her art. While still under eighteen, Peg was cast for old women's characters, such as *Mrs. Peachum,* and *Mother Midnight* in Farquhar's "Twin Rivals," in addition to other parts that called for humor in the performance of them.†

Her stay at the Theatre Royal was, however, but a short one. Mr. John Ward, the grandfather of the future Kembles and Siddons, after the demise of the elder Elrington, had come into some authority over the theatre. He was an overbearing and peevish old gentleman, and Peg's temper was not of the sort that could brook unreasonable interference with her duties. She had a quarrel with Mr. Ward about some slight business of the stage, and at the first honorable opportunity left the theatre to join a set of actors who

---

* *Woffington's* debut *as* Ophelia *has been set down by others as not occurring until 1737. But the Aungier Street house was at that time quite in disuse. Fashion had again set in favor of the* new *Smock Alley theatre, which replaced the old concern in 1735.*

† *Lee Lewes' Memoirs.*

called themselves the "Commonwealth." This new organization had hired the Rainsford Street Theatre, previously vacated by Madame Violante, and for a time they had some promise of success. There were a number of talented actors in it, including Isaac and Luke Sparks, John Barrington and Michael Dyer, all of whom afterward achieved distinction on the London stage.

It was now, at the age of eighteen, that Margaret Woffington began to unfold those charms and reveal those graces through which, for so many succeeding years, she enthralled mankind. In her face the cold symmetry of a regularity of feature gave way to liveliness of expression and the sparkle of animation. She was possessed of the tempting beauty of eye and mouth, the glowing health, the flashing wit, the sprightly humor and the quick intelligence of the native born Irish girl.

Probably none of the portraits painted of her by contemporaneous artists, famous or obscure, render absolute justice to the charms of Woffington. In most of them, indeed, and especially in Hogarth's painting of her as *Sir Harry Wildair*, we may discover the dreamy yet laughing black eyes, with their gracefully pencilled arched brows, the aquiline and delicately moulded nose, the well rounded coquettish chin; the pouting witchery of the ever-parted lips, the wonderful lithe and willowy figure, the slender hand and taper fingers, for which she was noted. She wore her hair without powder, brushed carelessly back to expose the white forehead, nearly always with a cap thrown gracefully on her head, or a little flat garden hat worn negligently, as we see her in most of the mezzotints of John Faber, of Michael Jackson and of James McArdell. Even these copied likenesses in black and white show us a face that is most interesting if not handsome, a roguish coquetry with a look of merriment animating the calm repose of features. But contemporary writers tell us there was a charm of loveliness in the personality of Margaret Woffington, and a fascinating beauty in her expression, that were beyond the painter's or the graver's art.

Hitchcock writes that her radiant intelligence, her sparkling repartee, her exquisite grace, her delightful archness of demeanor, were qualities that rivalled the loveliness of her face.*

---

* *Hitchcock's Irish Stage, Vol. I, p. 103.*

Murphy says that, unconscious of the impression her beauty produced, her ease was unrivalled.*

Lee Lewes tells us that, though coming from the humblest rank in society, she carried herself with an air, and portrayed the elegance and hauteur of a great lady with a naturalness that folks of good family did not disdain to imitate.†

We may read in the History of Clubs (1751–4) that her appearance on the stage was not so much a triumph of art as it was a revelation of nature: "She lent a fresh charm to the drama by presenting in it the witchery that was instinctive to herself, and added new graces to the poet's fancy by joining to them those of her own."

And in what particular charm of her sex did not Woffington become supreme,—this street waif, this bricklayer's daughter, with her Irish *verve*, her inimitable gracefulness, her coquettish manner, her brilliancy of conversation! This seller of water-cress, who developed into the finest of fine ladies, whose carriage and dignity were nearly perfect, whose loveliness of face and liveliness of wit were unimpeachable!

Perhaps I may be deemed premature in referring at this period of her life to these things. But those who have written most intimately of her tell us that even while yet a girl she began to set the fashion for the town in gowns, in manners, and in the pretty uses of the fan.

Although we are told that Margaret Woffington advanced rapidly in public favor, there is no intimation by any of the writers that she was unduly elated over her popularity. Her sex would have excused a certain amount of vanity as the result of the compliments her acting received; yet, although she had gained a sudden eminence solely through her own efforts, which was enough to turn any young person's head, Woffington seems to have displayed more good common sense than is given to many of her sex who achieve successes on the stage. She remained affable and free toward her friends, conscientious and diligent in her study, faithful to her engagements, and

---

* *Murphy's Life of Garrick, Vol. I, p. 35.*
† *Memoirs Lee Lewes, Vol. II.*

preserved her good humor, sincerity and agreeable manners with all. So much we learn from Davies in his Life of Garrick; and he is endorsed by a writer in the European Magazine of 1795.

Lee Lewes adds that she continued to perform characters of fine comedy with a simplicity of air that was as novel on the stage at that day as it was natural to herself. She was refined, pleasing and artless in her methods, without making any effort to attain these delightful qualities. The early training of Madame Violante had made Peggy a dancer of extreme grace, and, although she had not a voice of much power, she sang with a great amount of expression. She was naturally proud of her perfect figure, and, following the taste and freedom natural to the ladies of her day, she was not averse to display the shapeliness of her form, and hence we find her choosing the part of *Sylvia* in "The Recruiting Officer" for her first benefit, and coming voluntarily before the public in a masculine garb, that served to show off her free and graceful carriage to the best advantage. Her favorite characters, and those in which she made her greatest successes, were of this order.

It is evident that her quarrel with the Theatre Royal was of short duration, and that she made up her disagreement with Mr. Ward; for we discover her on the 25th April, 1738, announced to perform at a benefit given in favor of that old gentleman, when she appeared for the first time in her life as *Sir Harry Wildair* in "The Constant Couple," a character which she interpreted with a spirit so distinctively her own that it has ever since been associated with the memory of Peg Woffington.

Doran relates that she so enraptured one immature damsel by her performance of *Sir Harry*, that the young lady, believing her actually to be a man, made "him" an offer of marriage. It is very likely that Woffington may have had some such experience; but the real heroine of a similar episode was the reckless and unfortunate Charlotte Charke, the youngest daughter of Colley Cibber, who actually spent nearly half her life habited in men's habiliments—having renamed herself "Mr. Brown,"—and under that name became a gentleman's valet, a pastry cook, opened, first a huckster shop, then a puppet show, and finally went through all the vicissitudes of a strolling player in men's guise; and in the latter phase of her career she actually won

the heart of a young lady of great fortune who intended to marry her until "Mr. Brown's" companions betrayed her sex. No memoir of the last century is more replete with romance and misery than that of this unfortunate woman, who more than once acknowledges with grateful praise her indebtedness to Mrs. Woffington for generous assistance in her hours of direst need.

Last of her sire in dotage—she was used
By him, as children use a fav'rite toy:
Indulg'd, neglected, fondled, and abus'd,
As quick affection or capricious joy,
Or sudden humor of dislike dictated:
Thoughtlessly rear'd, she led a thoughtless life;
And she so well beloved became most hated;
A helpless mother, and a wife unblest,
She passed precocious womanhood in strife;
Or, in strange hiding places, without rest;—
Or, wand'ring in disquietude for bread:
Her father's curse—himself first cause of all
That caused his ban—sunk her in deeper thrall,
Stifling her heart, till sorrow and herself were dead.*

So high an admiration was aroused by Woffington through her performance of *Sir Harry*, that it was a leading theme of conversation in Dublin society for some time after her first appearance in the part, and no one was looked upon as being *a la mode*, who had not witnessed her famous impersonation of the rakish *Wildair*. During the run of the piece the following verses were published in a popular magazine. The reference in them to "Polly" applies to the character in "The Beggars' Opera" in which, as I have already written, Woffington had gained her earliest success. They were addressed to "*Miss Woffington Playing Sir Harry Wildair*":

Peggy, the darling of the town!
In Polly won each heart;
But now she captivates again,
And all must feel the smart.

Her charm, resistless, conquers all—
Both sexes vanquished lie,
And who to Polly scorned to fall,
By *Wildair*, ravaged, die.

* *The Table Book.*

Would lavish nature, who her gave
This double pow'r to please,
In Pity give her both to save
A double power to ease.

Numerous other verses were written in praise of *Wildair* by wits of the town. Among them these lines—

That excellent Peg!
Who showed such a leg
When lately she dressed in man's clothes—
A creature uncommon,
Who's both man and woman
And the chief of the belles and the beaux!*

The girlhood whose magnetism and beauty fascinated those who came within the circle of its influence, was not itself insensible to love. Peg Woffington had for some time been receiving with favor the attentions of a young gentleman of good family in Dublin, and we are told was, in 1738, engaged to be married to him. He was but the younger son of a gentleman whose estate adjoined the city, but made up in good looks what he lacked in purse. Woffington, not yet out of her 'teens, became quite infatuated with him. Her warm, impulsive, Irish nature was loyal to her betrothed and full of faith in his loyalty toward her. The young gentleman, however, appears to have been unworthy of the trust. He soon grew weary of mere affection. Being a younger son it was necessary for him to marry money. His father insisted that the affair with Woffington was only an incident in the life of a man of fashion, and must be broken off. In obedience to this parental command, Peg's affianced coolly contracted another engagement with a young heiress to an excellent estate.

We can well imagine that when Woffington became possessed of the facts of her lover's perfidy her rage had no bounds. A vindictiveness most natural to her sex, and not at all unnatural to her nationality, took possession of her usually gentle and cheerful disposition. Legend is quite rife with her name and her actions at this momentous period of her life, when smarting

* *Theatrical Magazine, Vol. I, page 129.*

under the first wrong a young girl's heart can feel. It is said that she left the stage for a while. Kept within her house. Banished all friendships from her heart. Would see nobody. And for a time, despair wrestled, with fate and fame, over her determination to cast off forever every interest in public favor or professional triumph.

A pamphlet printed after her death, and quoted from by a writer in the Dublin Review of August, 1864, gives us a very plausible sequel to this affair.

As the prospective wedding of her faithless *fiance* drew near, it is said Woffington resolved on a plan of revenge that was as original as it was effective. Habiting herself as an officer of the army,* and attended by a friend who personated her valet, she visited the village near which her rival's country seat was situated. A ball was given by the young woman's parents in honor of the approaching marriage. To this Woffington contrived to obtain an invitation. Thoroughly disguised with mustache and other devices of the stage, she carried her assumed character so well that she passed unrecognized even by her perfidious lover, who even expressed a desire for her better acquaintance. With the rest of the company she was equally successful. Peg, in short, made herself so extremely popular that she had the honor of walking a minuet with the bride-elect before the evening was far advanced. She made such good use of this opportunity that before the dance was over she had informed her rival of the young gentleman's *amour* with an actress called Woffington, and later in the evening gave further revelations of his true character to the expectant bride by showing a number of his love-letters containing protestations of eternal fidelity to the player in Dublin. This clever scheme, it is said, worked most admirably. The young gentleman's *fiancee* renounced him with indignation, and some chroniclers of the episode state that she transferred her affections to the dashing officer who had warned her in such timely season. This last, however, reads too much like the romance which I have already quoted from Doran. But the fact remains that Woffington accomplished a severe and triumphant revenge on the man who had deceived her.

---

* *Probably using her costume of* "Captain Pinch" *in* "*The Recruiting Officer.*"

PAINTED BY F. SMALLFIELD.

ENGRAVED BY G. C. FINDEN.

WOFFINGTON'S FIRST INTERVIEW WITH MANAGER RICH.

PERIOD III.

FROM AUNGIER STREET TO COVENT GARDEN.

THE year following the preceding incident found Margaret Woffington in London. Various causes are offered for Peggy's departure from Dublin. I confess I am puzzled as to which we should give most credit. It is said that in a frenzy of pique at discovering the heartless perfidy of her first sweetheart, she accepted the attentions of another suitor, and yielding to his tempting picture of brighter and better times, and, above all, "forgetfulness" in the gaieties of the Metropolis, that she peremptorily terminated her engagement at the Aungier Street Theatre and took passage for London. It has also been attempted to identify the companion of her flight (it seems to have been a flight) from Dublin with the very gentleman to whom she had first given her virgin heart, and whom she had reconquered from her rival (after the adventure related at the close of the previous chapter).

Some writers ignore the episode referred to altogether, and state that while performing at the Aungier Street Theatre she had captured the affections of a young gentleman named Coffey, the younger son of one of the gentry of the Irish capital;* that she, too, had fallen over head and out of reason in love with him; that fame and fortune became secondary considerations (as they always will in these cases of very youthful love), and that they eloped together and started, unknown to everybody, for other scenes. Whichever page we turn the chroniclers give her a lover for companion in her journey

** Possibly the young author of "The Devil to Pay," who has been noted as taking a deep interest in her earliest histrionic efforts. He died in London some years later.*

to London. And yet it is quite singular that we lose all traces of this gentleman after her arrival there. He never crops up again—anywhere. It would not be unnatural, therefore, to suppose that there was no lover whatever in the case, and that if her companion was one of the opposite sex, he was merely a friend, or perhaps one of those platonic heroes with whom most actresses are blessed, or cursed, during their lives,—who are willing to serve their goddesses blindly, often foolishly, and who are the last persons in the world to oppose calm counsel or worldly prudence to the womanish freaks or fancies of those to whom they have become the bounden slaves.

But I am inclined to believe there was no such companion; and I discover a more reasonable cause for her departure from Dublin in the fact that during the season of 1739–40, for three months, all the theatres were closed in Ireland on account of the famine which afflicted that country, produced by the phenomenally early and severe winter of 1739. Finding occupation and revenue closed to her in her own country, what more natural than to suppose her seeking both in another.

That Woffington's departure from Dublin was sudden there seems to be no question. There are also grounds for supposing that she offended many people by the rupture of her relations with the Theatre Royal, and when two or three seasons later we find her back again in Ireland, she does not return to the Aungier Street Theatre, but to the Smock Alley house.

I have seen it hinted that Woffington had made an earlier visit to England, and that she had played in London, when a child, at the little theatre in the Haymarket. This, I think, is stated more as an inference than from any positive or known fact. Advertisements of Madame Violante and her Lilliputians as acting at the Haymarket in London are quoted as proof of Woffington's previous visit. It is more than likely, however, that if this had been the case the remarkable talent which had caused her to be picked out by Dublin audiences as the object of special praises and favors, would not have passed entirely unrecognized by the London public, who have ever been most justly credited with a unique gift in detecting positive talent, and in separating the real from the false in art.

One fact is positively known, however, that Woffington found herself in the Metropolis (when she arrived after her hurried departure from Dublin) without an engagement. It is reasonable to suppose that she believed her reputation and popularity in the Irish capital had preceded her,* and that she would not experience any very great difficulty in renewing her relations with the theatre. She first applied to Christopher Rich, the manager of Covent Garden. At that time the see-saw of public favor, rocking between Covent Garden and Drury Lane, had sent the latter to the ground and had lifted its rival house to the airy eminence. Rich at this period had grown to be quite an important creature. His great good luck in the production of Gay's "Beggars' Opera," which had made (as the wits of the day said) "Rich gay and Gay rich," had possibly over-elated the fortunate manager, and it is said that at this juncture of his career he was "at home" to nobody under a baronet.

Ignorant or indifferent to all this, and quite self-confident of her own worth, Woffington boldly went to Rich's office and asked to see him. Stage porters in those days were quite as obdurate as in our own, and faithful guardians of the stage door in the Eighteenth Century were quite as insusceptible to bribes or beauty as they are in the Nineteenth. Woffington made eighteen visits to Covent Garden before Rich received her. We have no stenographic report of the interview, but if Peggy's temper and tongue may be measured by those of the stage-door applicants within my experience, Rich must have had a poor time of it on that eventful morning when Peggy finally got word with him.

A writer in the Dublin Review has pictured very graphically this first meeting.

"The great manager, as Woffington first saw him, was lolling in ungraceful ease on a sofa, holding a play in one hand, and in the other a tea-cup, from which he sipped frequently. Around about him were seven and twenty cats of all sizes, colors and kinds. Toms and Tabbies, old cats and

---

* *Chetwood, p. 252. Davies' Life of Garrick, Vol. I, p. 341.*

kittens, tortoise shells, Maltese, brindles, white, black and yellow cats of every description. Some were frisking over the floor, others asleep on the rug; one was licking the buttered toast on his breakfast plate, another was engaged in drinking the cream for his tea, two cats lay on his knee, one was asleep on his shoulder, and another sat demurely on his head. Peg Woffington was astounded at the sight. Rich to her mind had for years been the greatest man in the world. The menagerie of grimalkins, amid which he lay so carelessly, was so different an environment from her conception of the study of the Covent Garden theatre manager, that she was embarrassed into silence. Rich, in his turn, was equally confused by the beauty of his visitor, and lay staring at her for a long time before he recollected his courtesy and offered her a chair. Standing before him was a woman whom he afterward declared to be the loveliest creature he had ever seen. She was taller than the ordinary standard of height, faultless in form, dignified even to majesty, yet withal winsome and piquant. Her dark hair, unstained by powder, fell in luxuriant wealth over her neck and shoulders. 'It was a fortunate thing for my wife,' said Rich in afterwards recounting the scene to Sir Joshua Reynolds, 'that I was not of a susceptible temperament. Had it been otherwise, I should have found it difficult to retain my equanimity enough to arrange business negotiations with the amalgamated Calypso, Circe and Armida who dazzled my eyes. A more fascinating daughter of Eve never presented herself to a manager in search of rare commodities. She was as majestic as Juno, as lovely as Venus, and as fresh and charming as Hebe.'"

Mrs. Bellamy, the mother of the fair one of that name of later fame, was a member of the Covent Garden company when Margaret Woffington joined it; she had been there for a couple of seasons. She was also a member of the Aungier Street house when Woffington first entered that company. The subsequent rivalry of the two daughters had not then separated the families of Bellamy and Woffington, and we may imagine a friendly greeting between the elder and the younger woman as they found themselves again on the same stage. I also find the name of Hallam in the Covent Garden company when Woffington entered it; he was playing such parts as Laertes;

it was, doubtless, the same Hallam who brought to New York a company of English actors which played here in 1752, and at intervals for twenty or thirty years after.

The season of 1740 and 1741 at Covent Garden began on the 19th of September. Our heroine did not make her *debut* until November the 6th (1740).* The play was Farquhar's "Recruiting Officer," and the *debutante* played the part of *Sylvia*, in which she had been so successful in Dublin. She was announced as *Miss* Woffington on the opening bill; but in every subsequent announcement she is called *Mrs.* Woffington. It was the fashion and habit of the time. Of course she had not been married between the two performances, as the relative terms might suggest; the title "Miss" being given to very young gentlewomen,† and "Mistress" to grown-up unmarried ladies. In this case the "Miss" was the last relic of Peg's lilliputian career. The full cast of this eventful evening may not be out of place here.

CAPTAIN PLUME	RYAN.
CAPTAIN BRAZEN	CIBBER, JR.
JUSTICE BALANCE	BRIDGEWATER.
SERGEANT KITE	ROSCO.
MR. WORTHY	HALE.
BULLOCK	NEALE.
1ST RECRUIT	HIPPERSLY.
MELINDA	MRS. WARE.
ROSE	MRS. VINCENT.
LUCY	MRS. KILLEY.
SYLVIA	*Miss* WOFFINGTON.

She repeated the part on November 8th (when the *Miss* was altered to *Mrs.* on the bills), and on the 10th, 11th, 19th of that month, and frequently, later in the season. It was a wise selection, for the opening scenes of *Sylvia* are tender and womanly enough, and coquettish withal; while in the

* Geneste. (*Davies makes the date 1738. Hitchcock makes it 1739. But Geneste gives us the bill of the night and finally fixes the date.*)

† "*Under the age of ten.*"—TODD.

later acts, as the town swell or the rakish officer, the part affords an actress of versatile powers, such as Woffington afterward displayed, varied opportunities to indicate their presence. At all events, Chetwood, the old prompter of Drury Lane, informs us that our heroine at once established herself, by this performance, in London as firmly as she had in Dublin. She at once became quite the rage in the Metropolis, but we are told that at this period of her career the pleasure of society had little charms for her, and she devoted herself entirely to her stage duties. A great many verses were addressed to her in the public prints, and among others the following:

TO *MISS* WOFFINGTON

on her playing the part of "Sylvia."

When first in petticoats you trod the stage,
Our sex with love you fired: your own with rage;
In breeches next, so well you played the cheat—
The pretty fellow and the rake complete—
Each sex was then with different passions moved:
The men grew envious and the women loved!

Woffington's second character at Covent Garden was *Lady Sadlife* in "The Double Gallant," which she acted on the 13th of November. Her next was *Aura* in "Country Lasses," in which the heroine goes into disguise, in men's apparel, and then, on the 21st of November, the "Constant Couple" was produced with ("by particular desire," so the official announcements ran) *Sir Harry Wildair* by *Mrs. Woffington*, a part which she ever afterward held as her own against all rivals—even Garrick himself, who played it two or three times only, when he and Woffington were acting together at Drury Lane.

Wildair had never before been acted by a woman. It had, indeed, been in disuse since the death of Robert Wilks, who was the creator of the part and for years the only representative of the character. Estcourt, whom the old prompter Downes called *Histrio natus*, attempted the part; but notwithstanding his rare graces, and natural gifts, made no reputation in it. Woffington acted *Wildair* with an ease, a grace,

an elegance and *propriety*, that both Davies and Hitchcock (who quote even others) proclaim that no male actor ever equaled her in. She acted the part twenty times the first season, and, indeed, had now established herself so strongly in public favor that but few bills were thereafter offered in which her name did not appear.

Woffington was at this time in the 22d year of her age. All her judges confessed, after her first performance of "The Constant Couple," that it was reserved for this young woman not only to surpass the skill of Wilks in *Sir Harry Wildair*, but to lend to the character an exquisite delicacy, a sparkle and vigor that went beyond the author's warmest hopes.* The reputation which Mrs. Woffington had enjoyed for her *Sylvia* was so much enhanced by this second performance that she at once became the reigning toast in the clubs, and her entrances on the stage were the signal for so much applause that she had to pause in her speeches frequently in order to secure a silence that would do them justice. It was universally admitted that the representation of the gay, good-natured, dissipated and generous rake of fashion suited her powers most admirably, and that she not only lent to the character an ease of deportment and an elegance of carriage that made *Wildair* a natural and delightful piece of comedy, but, as I have said, displayed many tokens of vigor and spirit that seemed beyond the reach of womanhood.

Again was Woffington the subject of the verse-makers, and the following, it is said, caused her much amusement. It was written on the blank page of a book belonging to Davies, the biographer of Garrick.

To MISS WOFFINGTON, 1740.

If when the Breast is rent with Pain,
It be no crime the Nymph should know it—
Oh, Woffington! accept the strain,
Pity, though you'll not cure, the Poet.

---

* *Hitchcock.*

Should you reject my ardent prayer,
Yet send not back the amorous Paper:
My pangs may help to curl your Hair:
My passion fringe the glowing Taper.

No more the Theatre I seek
But when I'm promised there to find you;
All HORTON'S merits now grow weak,
And CLIVE remains far, far behind you.

'Tis thus the polished Pebble plays
And gains awhile some vulgar praises,
But soon withdraws its feeble rays
When the superior Diamond blazes.

Who sees you shine in *Wildair's* part,
But sudden feels his bosom panting;
Your very sex receives the Dart
And almost thinks there's nothing wanting.

The performance made her, in short, the "rage" of the town. Everybody had to see her. Everybody who was anybody did see her. The Cherokee chiefs who were then visiting England in state, joined the enraptured throng of admirers, and declared that the only thing she lacked to make her a perfect woman was—a copper skin!

Woffington's first season ended on the 15th of May, when she acted *Violante* in the "Double Falsehood" and delivered the original epilogue, and then emphasized her consummate art in one of the most trying ordeals of the stage—the graceful delivery of an Epilogue or Prologue. She had also acted during this season *Elvira* in the "Spanish Fryar," *Victoria* in the "Fatal Marriage," *Florella* in "Greenwich Park," *Phyllis* in the "Conscious Lovers," *Angelica* in the "Gamester," *Cherry* in the "Beaux Stratagem," and for the benefit of Chetwood (who had been prompter at Drury Lane and was now a prisoner in the King's Bench) she acted *Lætitia* in "The Old Bachelor," with COLLEY CIBBER as *Fondlewife*, her first time of acting with the famous apologist for his own life; his book at that time having just been printed.

But, though Woffington was admired in everything which she acted, *Sylvia* and *Wildair* were the exceptional triumphs of that season.

Her variety in these parts and the cleverness with which she assumed them made her performances most attractive to London.

"It was admitted by the best critics," says Macklin, "that Peg Woffington represented the gay, good-humored, dissipated rake of fashion with an ease and elegance of deportment that seemed almost out of the reach of female accomplishments, and her fame flew about the town with such rapidity that the comedies she appeared in had each a run and proved a considerable addition to the treasury."*

"The house was crowded nightly," says Hitchcock, "and so infinitely did she surpass expectations that it was beyond any at that time ever known. It was reserved for Woffington to exhibit the elegant man of fashion in a style, perhaps, beyond the author's warmest ideas, and she never failed of drawing a most brilliant and admiring audience."†

---

* "*Mackliniana*"—*European Magazine, May, 1800.*

† *Hitchcock's Irish Stage.*

PERIOD IV.

FROM COVENT GARDEN TO DRURY LANE.

THE following season Woffington left Covent Garden for Drury Lane. Why Rich was blind enough to let her slip from his theatre is a mystery. Mrs. Pritchard is in the cast for her characters at Covent Garden, and certainly her salary could not have been less than that of the younger actress'. Still we are told that Rich declined to make any advance on his original terms with Woffington, who naturally expected an increased remuneration after the very great successes she had made. Rich at first hesitated and then tried to bully her. Woffington was naturally sensitive as to her own worth and was conscientiously firm when her mind was made up.

She promptly left Covent Garden Theatre and went to the other house, where, on the 8th of September, 1741, she opened in the character of *Sylvia*. This seems always to have been her favorite part, and naturally so: it is womanly, tender, rakish and heroic, all in one. The very part for an actress whose talents do not run in a single groove—and who is blessed with something more than a mere monotone.

The company engaged at Drury Lane this season was a remarkable one. Among the women we find the names of Kitty Clive, Miss Cibber (daughter of Theophilus), Mrs. Mills, Mrs. Macklin, Mrs. Butler and Mrs. Ridout. Among the men Macklin (already famous for his naturalistic performances and, even at this date, generally noted for his unstilted and wholly untheatrical declamation), Theophilus Cibber, Mills, Cross (husband of the pretty Mrs. Cross, who was also in this company), and Ben Johnson (who was in his 77th year and died this season).

This Johnson was probably the first actor who became especially noted for ignoring the audience: on entering upon the stage he used to fix his large blue eyes upon the person to whom he was talking, and was never known to let them wander from the scene to any part of the theatre.* Milward, an actor who was praised for his possession of a voice which comprehended and expressed the utmost compass of harmony, was also a member of the company.† He played characters ranging from *Othello* an *Hamlet* to such as ranked in light and low comedy.

Mrs. Woffington played during her first season at Drury Lane *Lady Brute* in "The Provoked Wife," for the first time; and *Nerissa* in "Merchant of Venice" to the *Portia* of Kitty Clive and the *Shylock* of Macklin (it was during the previous season that he had broken loose from tradition and presented "the Jew that Shakspere drew"); she also played *Rosalind* for the first time with Mrs. Clive as *Celia*, Macklin as *Touchstone*, and Cibber, Jr., as *Jaques*. This year there was also an important revival of "All's Well that Ends Well," in which Woffington acted *Helena*, Theophilus Cibber *Parolles*, Macklin the *Clown* and Mrs. Ridout *Diana*.

There seems to have been a singular fatality about this production of Shakspere's comedy. It was first announced for production on the 22d of January, 1742, after having been forgotten as a stage play for at least a century. The rehearsals had been attended with more or less mishap, and on the first representation, Woffington, who had fought against every advice to the contrary, came to the theatre from a sick bed, dressed for her part, and even went out upon the stage and stood by the scene, ready to make her first entrance, when she fainted away and had to be carried back to her dressing room, and eventually home. The part was read upon this occasion by Mrs. Mills, and the play proceeded in that lame fashion. It was announced for repetition for the following Friday, "if Mrs. Woffington were well enough." But when Friday came, Milward, who had played *The King* on the first night was taken ill, and "All's Well" did not see the footlights

---

* *Geneste. Vol. IV, p. 2.*

† *Hill, in his preface to Zara.*

again until February 16th. Mrs. Ridout, who had played *Diana*, was now taken ill, and after playing one night, was forbidden by her physician to act for a month; and Mrs. Butler, who acted the *Countess*, was also seized with some mysterious distemper during the progress of the piece. Certainly this is a chapter of accidents sufficient to discourage any manager, and although Geneste disputes with Davies the correctness of some of the particulars, his only reason for doing so is that all the above names appear in each bill of performance: a weak point to take, as all know, in our own times, who having read the name of some favorite player on the programme of the night, have found a substitute performing his or her part. Finally, to cap the climax, Milward did not take sufficient precaution when he re-appeared in the part of *The King*, and caught a cold through wearing too thin a costume, and speedily fell a victim to consumption.

During his illness he was tenderly nursed by Woffington, who, although but slightly acquainted with him, we are told, felt much sympathy for his unfortunate condition. Milward was greatly affected by her kindness, and repeatedly declared that Woffington's heart was as gentle as her face was lovely. Once, when he was very weak, one of his friends asked him if he had hopes of his recovery. "How is it possible for me to die," he returned with a faint effort at pleasantry, "when I have such a physician as Mrs. Woffington." Even her care, however, could not save the unfortunate Milward, who died before the end of February. On March 8th his widow and children were given a benefit, for which Woffington acted;—and, indeed, when did not this warm-hearted, generous woman respond to the call of charity in behalf of friend or foe?

For a brief spell Delane succeeded to Milward's characters, such as *Hamlet*, *Young Bevil* and *Macbeth*, but he made no mark, and he was but a make-shift until the appearance on those boards of the great genius, who thenceforward, for over a quarter of a century, was to illumine the stage of his time with his own refulgent light, and who was to leave such an indelible impress upon the life of Margaret Woffington.

On the 16th of May, David Garrick made his *debut* at Drury Lane

for the benefit of the widow of Harpur, the comedian but recently deceased. A benefit had been previously announced for Harpur's widow, but it must have failed somehow, hence the second one. Garrick again appeared at Drury Lane on the 26th as *Bayes* in the "Rehearsal," and for a third time as *King Lear* to the *Cordelia* of Mrs. Woffington; and finally as *Richard III* on the 31st of May, when the season closed.

We can imagine the effect upon Woffington of these few, comparatively accidental, performances by the marvellous actor who had but that season made his *debut* in London (October 19th, 1741, was the date of Garrick's first appearance at the little out-of-the-way Goodman's Fields' Theatre), and who had electrified the Metropolis, as it had never before been moved, from the very first moment he strode upon the stage in Colley Cibber's version of *Richard III.** From the polite ends of Westminster the most elegant company had flocked to see him, and Geneste says, "Temple Bar was choked with a string of coaches every night he played."†

Garrick had the charm of youth in his favor, but I doubt if he ought to be credited with originating the easy and familiar yet forcible style of speaking and acting which seems, from all accounts, to have been the great attraction of his method as contrasted with the monotonous "musical cadences" of his predecessors. Macklin certainly was the first to cut loose from the settled, pedantic and pompous methods (though withal graceful) of Quin, Betterton and Barton Booth, and in his later years opened a school to teach his "natural system."

Garrick had acted from October to May at Goodman's Fields, after which the theatre was permanently closed. A similar managerial envy and rivalry

---

* *The programme of Goodman's Fields' Theatre announced "The Part of King Richard, by A Gentleman who never appeared on any stage." This was not correct. Garrick had acted under the name of* Lydell *for an entire season,—before this London debut,—at Ipswich, with a company under the management of Giffard, the manager of Goodman's Fields' Theatre. Giffard afterward brought him out in the Metropolis, as above noted. He made his debut in the little house near Ratcliffe Highway, in a "black" character, in order to conceal his blushes and nervousness, and to disguise his identity if he failed.*

† *Why Temple Bar should have been choked with carriages on their way to a theatre over a mile distant, the other side of St. Paul's, it is difficult to comprehend. If this statement is true, Garrick's performances must have been attended with as much carriage company as a New York politician's funeral.*

to that which had caused Violante's booth in Dublin to be shut up, prevailed upon the authorities in London to put in force a previous Act of Parliament, and so drove from the field this more successful rival to its "patented" adversaries. This brought Garrick to Drury Lane, where as I have shown he gave a few performances at the end of the season of 1741–42; and he was also engaged by Fleetwood (who was at that time the manager of this house) for the whole of the succeeding season, at the then unheard of salary of six hundred guineas a year.

It is quite presumable that Woffington and Garrick had met long before these few preliminary performances at Drury Lane. It is not at all unlikely that two such beings, both drawing their inspirations from nature's own fount, should have been mutually attracted toward each other. Garrick came to London with Samuel Johnson,* and had, therefore, been many months a resident of the Metropolis before Woffington made her *debut* at Covent Garden, and must have been quite a "man about town" when she set London a-fire with her performances of *Sylvia* and *Wildair*. Indeed, it is related that he was a frequenter of the green-rooms of the period. These were more "free" to the beaux and wits of that time than at any other period of modern stage history, though quite fashionable resorts in the Roman theatres of the decadence of the Empire. Garrick is described even at this time as having eyes for no one but Peggy. It is about this date we may suppose him to have written those verses which have been most generally ascribed to him, though some have given the credit of them to another of Woffington's admirers: Sir Charles Hanbury Williams. Whoever the writer, they certainly were written in eulogy of Woffington. They originally appeared in the London Magazine.

TO PEGGY.

By D. G.

Once more I'll Tune my vocal Shell,
To hills and dales my Passion tell,
A Flame which Time can never quell
That burns for lovely Peggy.

---

* *At St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell, where "Johnson" toiled for Cave, there is, or was until lately, emblazoned on one of the walls in large letters: "In this room Garrick made his essay as an actor in London in 1737, in the farce of the Mock Doctor." Garrick was but twenty-one at that date.*

Yet greater Bards the Lyre should hit—
For, pray, what Subject is more fit
Than to record the radiant Wit
And Bloom of lovely Peggy?

The Sun, first rising in the morn,
That paints the dew-bespangled Thorn,
Doth not so much the day Adorn
As does my lovely Peggy.
And when in Thetis' lap to rest
He streaks with Gold the ruddy west
He's not so Beauteous, as undrest
Appears my lovely Peggy.

Were she Arrayed in rustic weed
With her the Bleating flocks I'd feed,
And pipe upon my Oaten reed
To Please my lovely Peggy.
With her a Cottage would delight.
All pleases when she's in my Sight!
But when she's gone 'Tis endless Night—
All's dark without my Peggy.

When Zephyr on the violet Blows,
Or Breathes upon the damask rose,
He does not half the Sweets disclose
That does my lovely Peggy.
I stole a kiss the other day—
And trust me, Naught but Truth I say,
The fragrant Breath of blooming May
Was not so sweet as Peggy.

While bees from Flowers to Flowers rove,
And Linnets warble through the Grove,
Or Stately swans the Waters love—
So long shall I love Peggy.
And when Death, with his Pointed dart,
Shall strike the blow that rends my Heart,
My Words shall be when I depart
Adieu my lovely Peggy!

That Garrick was seriously in love with Woffington at this period, and long before they played together on the same stage, there can be little doubt;

and, as was the fashion of the time, he published his love in verse form more than once. In a collection of "Poems by Various Hands," issued by Dodsley in six volumes (first edition of 1763), the following is to be found under the date of 1743.

SONG TO SYLVIA.

By D. G.

If Truth can fix thy wav'ring Heart,
Let Damon urge his claim;
He feels the Passion, void of art—
The pure, the constant Flame.

Though sighing swains their Torments tell—
Their sensual love contemn;
They only prize the beauteous Shell,
But slight the inward Gem.

Possession cures the wounded Heart,
Destroys the Transient Fire,
But when the Mind receives the Dart,
Enjoyment whets desire.

Your charms such slavish Sense Controul,
A Tyrant's short lived Reign!
But milder Reason rules the Soul,
Nor Time can break the Chain.

By Age your Beauty will decay,
Your Mind improve with Years:
And when the Blossom fades away
The Ripening Fruit appears.

May Heaven and Sylvia grant my suit,
And bless the future Hour—
That Damon who can taste the Fruit
May gather every Flower.

From such evidences of Garrick's feeling it is not unreasonable to suppose that he sought, or at least eagerly accepted, the Drury Lane engagement, so as to be nearer the lovely woman and actress who is known to

have charmed him and kept him in willing thraldom for some years after. There is no doubt whatever that the end of this season, Garrick's first in London and Woffington's first at Drury Lane, found these two great players of one mind, one in aim and pursuit: and, most probably, one in heart. Woffington was twenty-four years of age, Garrick was twenty-six, having been born in February, 1716, in the town of Hereford, which was also, it has been asserted, the birthplace of Nell Gwynn.

PERIOD V.

FROM THE THAMES TO THE LIFFEY.

WHATEVER Woffington's feelings toward Garrick may have been up to the close of their first Drury Lane season together, matters were coming to a pleasurable climax for them. The Drury Lane term closed with the end of May. In June we find Garrick and Woffington announced to act together at the Smock Alley Theatre in Dublin.

This was not the old Smock Alley house of Woffington's girlhood, but a new and handsome building erected on the same site.* The Aungier Street Theatre was now the "old and forsaken" concern, and fashion had turned its face toward the newer temple.

During the two years that Woffington had been away in London all the Dublin theatres had been more or less neglected. The managers, partly from lethargy, partly from lack of means, had not engaged actors of sufficient ability to tempt popular interest to the drama. There was no one who could draw an audience as the absent Woffington was wont to do—though George Anne Bellamy had made her *debut* during this period; but, while supported by a choice coterie from the Castle precincts, she had not been financially attractive.

In addition to this, the crops had been poor for one or two seasons, the winters extraordinarily inclement, and money scarce with everyone.

Theatrical matters, previous to 1742, therefore, were as dull and depressing in Dublin as they could be. At the opening of this season, however, the

*"*The new and handsome theatre" is no more—not a vestige remains; and on the spot there was erected a little Catholic church, but (1886) even that has disappeared—and the site long since devoted to other uses.*

MARGARET WOFFINGTON in 1740.

managers of the old Theatre Royal were resolved to change the condition of matters. They had already engaged Quin, then in the meridian of his power: an actor whom many people thought equal to Garrick; and Mrs. Cibber, quite fresh from her long retirement from the musical arena, was specially brought from London to support Quin's *Young Bevil* in "The Corsican Lovers," by assuming the part of *Indiana*.

Some years previously, when Handel visited Dublin to conduct a performance of his own oratorio, Mrs. Cibber had sung several of the principal passages; and the recollection of her musical powers, joined to her newly-revealed ability as an actress, combined to make this lady much of a favorite in Dublin. Mr. Quin, therefore, with her support, opened his season at the Theatre Royal under very favorable auspices, and with every promise of an abundant pecuniary success. So strong a cast of favorite plays had revived, in some measure, the dormant appetite of the Irish public for the drama.

Meanwhile Duval, the manager of the Smock Alley Theatre, spite of his new house, was playing to empty benches. So powerful a combination as that offered at the rival theatre gave him the alternative between a supreme effort and bankruptcy. He chose the former. A trusty messenger was hurried off to London, who engaged, at their own terms, Mr. Garrick and Mrs. Woffington for a season in Dublin. Walker (the famous *Macheath* of earlier years) and other actors of recognized ability were at the same time employed to support the twin stars fittingly. Duval was well rewarded for this liberal policy. So great was the reputation in Ireland of David Garrick and Margaret Woffington, that either one would have plucked the laurels from the triumphant Royal.* With both together, Duval could sway the kingdom. Combined forces so powerful, had never yet been seen on the Irish stage.

Here, then, we have the extraordinary spectacle of all the histrionic powers of Great Britain arrayed in rivalry over the possession of an Irish town, which but the day before had seemed to be asleep.

On the 15th of June, 1742, hostilities were opened by the reappearance of Mrs. Woffington in her famous character of *Sylvia*, supported by David

* *Murphy's Life of Garrick; Davies' Life of Garrick; Hitchcock's Irish Stage.*

Garrick as *Plume.* On the following Friday Mr. Garrick appeared as *Richard III,* supported by Mrs. Woffington as *Lady Anne.* There were not as many folks, by half, inside the theatre as there were struggling at the doors. Those who succeeded in gaining admittance held audience next day to recount the marvels of these performances. The return of "Lovely Peggy" to her native town, and the opportunity to feel the magnetism of Garrick's art, were themes that occupied conversation in the Irish capital, from the Castle to the hovel. After a few attempts to stem the tide of popular favor, the Theatre Royal closed with Mrs. Cibber's *Andromache*—the last character performed by this admirable actress during that engagement in Ireland: and Smock Alley carried everything before it.

This eventful season continued during June, July and August, three months of the very hottest weather that had, up to that time, ever been recorded for Ireland.

Indeed, the excessive heat, and the concurrent excitement among those who attended the performances at Smock Alley, aided not a little, perhaps, by the atmosphere of a close and illy ventilated playhouse, were the causes of an epidemic which broke out about this time in Dublin, which from the circumstances of the moment was called "The Garrick Fever." This was certainly a disagreeable feature of the season, but it was the only one.

Garrick became an immediate favorite with the most fastidious play-goers in Great Britain, and Woffington was re-crowned queen of the Dublin heart.

Garrick had every reason to acknowledge his indebtedness to Woffington, and to her advice may be ascribed much of his social popularity. She helped him to understand the Irish character, and he had the good common sense to accept her suggestions, and was rewarded accordingly by successes he might not otherwise have achieved. Whatever of love there may have been between them at this time was prudently concealed, and both fared all the better for it in the estimation of a world which prefers to consider its idols as models of propriety, even if they be not so. In this way it offers a premium on prudence and regard for appearances—virtues in themselves, when the virtues they simulate are absent.

An incident is related of this period of their careers, which has been told in various ways, sometimes quite viciously, and sometimes with another "third party," but always with Garrick and Woffington as hero and heroine.

Mrs. Woffington was overrun with suitors, as may be supposed. It is the fate of all actresses: great ones especially; young and pretty ones more so than others. All her suitors were naturally jealous of Garrick. Every night they writhed in their stalls from jealous envy at seeing these two young and comely players make public love to each other on the stage:—the dames of fashion jealous of Woffington with Garrick, the young fops of College Green green with envy of Garrick with Peggy. Especially was this the state of feeling in the breast of one ardent young lordling, who was, in his sane and quiet moments, a not unwelcome visitor at Woffington's home: the home, also, we may not doubt, of her mother and sister. Garrick had called to see her one day, and, as was then the custom, he had his head shaved and wore a wig. The weather, as we have already noted, was frightfully warm, and Garrick, being on the friendliest terms at Mrs. Woffington's house, had taken off his wig to cool his head, and laying it aside had forgot all about it. In the midst of their interview My Lord ——— was announced. He was a great patron of the drama, besides being a personal admirer of the fair Peggy, and as neither Woffington nor Garrick cared to offend so powerful a person, the actor quickly concealed himself in another room to avoid increasing the visitor's jealousy.

But upon the table, when his lordship entered, right before his eyes, lay the fatal wig!

He at once recognized it to be that of Garrick, and stormed at Peggy, who calmly listened to him, and when he had finished broke out into an immoderate fit of laughter. "Yes, my lord," she exclaimed, "it is certainly Mr. Garrick's wig; and as I am learning a new breeches-part he was good enough to lend it to me to practice with: this is the simple truth: and I beg you never let me hear you talk jealous nonsense again!" The enamoured nobleman, it is said, believed her; and thus her ready wit saved for both herself and Garrick My Lord's friendship and patronage.

PERIOD V.

This brief summer season in Dublin continued with unabated success until the 25th of August, when it was brought to a close with a performance of "The Recruiting Officer," Garrick again playing *Plume;* Walker, the original *Macheath,* played *Kite,** and Woffington, of course, *Sylvia.* She had added *Lady Betty Modish* to her personations this summer also, and her fine *dame a la mode* had no less enthusiastic admirers than her rakish man about town.

Of course it is not to be supposed that Woffington always escaped harsh criticism. None, in fact, are so liable to the carpings of the critical authorities as those who are most successful in the literary or the theatrical field. Her voice seems to have been her most vulnerable point, but then only when she essayed parts in heavy tragedy;—nevertheless we find to the very last years of her life her name as frequently cast for tragic roles as for those in comedy, even when such favorites as Mrs. Cibber and Mrs. Pritchard (who may be called the immediate predecessor of Mrs. Siddons in the roles of higher tragedy) were in the same company. So Woffington was evidently the preference of her audiences, even in tragic parts, and, as Dr. Johnson has very sagely said, "That which pleases long and pleases many must possess some merit."

Woffington's last act before leaving Ireland at the end of this phenomenal summer season was to have her mother comfortably settled in a respectable home, and to provide for her sister's education in all the branches of elegant learning and the accomplishments of a lady of society.

It was no more than was to be expected of a big-hearted woman like Woffington, that no sooner was she able to do so than she at once placed her family beyond the cares of poverty for the remainder of their lives. It is said that for many years old Mrs. Woffington might have been seen going about in Dublin, from one Catholic chapel to the other, attired in a large black velvet mantle, and carrying a gold snuff-box.† As for her sister, Peggy removed Polly from Dublin a few years later and placed her at school in a French convent.

---

* *Walker played but very seldom following this, and died very shortly after, in Dublin.*
† *O'Keefe's Recollections.*

To accomplish these duties, Woffington remained in Dublin some little while after the close of the engagement; and it is a notable incident that Garrick and Mrs. Cibber took passage together in the same packet for England. It is somewhat singular, too, that when Garrick next acted in Dublin, a few years later, Mrs. Cibber played an engagement there at the same time, and without Mrs. Woffington. Many writers have dwelt so strongly upon Woffington's lightness of character and general heedlessness as reasons for the later changes in Garrick's feeling towards her, that I point with emphasis to an inference to be gathered from the above facts: it is not at all unlikely the gentleman gave her many occasions for retaliatory words and deeds, and in no case more than in his frequent intercourse and companionship with the fair but frail sister of good Doctor Arne.

However, let us rejoin our company on the banks of the muddy Thames after their very profitable trip up the muddier Liffey.

PERIOD VI.

FROM HOUSE-DRAWING TO HOUSE-KEEPING.

WOFFINGTON continued at Drury Lane during the next season, which opened on the 11th of September: with Macklin as *Shylock* and Kitty Clive as *Portia*. Peggy did not appear until the 14th of the month, when she acted *Rosalind*, with Kitty Clive as *Celia*. Garrick was not seen until the 5th of October, when he appeared as *Chamont* in Otway's "Orphan," with Mrs. Pritchard as *Monimia*. He had previously played *Richard III* for two evenings at Covent Garden, with Mrs. Cibber as *Lady Anne* and Quin as *Henry VI.*

Drury Lane company was never before so strong. An important revival of "The Recruiting Officer" was given in October, when Garrick played *Plume* for the first time at Drury Lane. Macklin acted *Brazen*, and Kitty Clive *Rose*, a part in which she seems to have made fame enough to be perpetuated in a couple of admirable mezzotints. The next month (Nov. 16th) was the first time that Garrick performed *Hamlet* in London, though he had played the part in Ireland; and in the Drury Lane cast we find the names of Kitty Clive for *Ophelia* and Mrs. Pritchard for the *Queen;* Macklin played the *First Gravedigger.* Here's versatility if you will, but not greater than is evidenced in the cast of the very next play produced, when we find the stately Pritchard (who was wont to prate of her "gownds") cast for the saucy servant-maid, *Patch*, in "The Busybody." For Woffington's first benefit in London, which occurred on St. Patrick's Day, 1743, "The Constant Couple" was acted, when Woffington resigned her part of *Wildair* to Garrick; reserving for herself the part of *Lady Lurewell*, and passing the most of the evening in

WOFFINGTON and SHUTER
in the "MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR."

ACT IV. SCENE II.

prompting Sir Harry. None of Garrick's biographers give even a line of comment to his performance of *Wildair*. Tate Wilkinson says he made an unhappy failure in it.

Ah! if one could but lift the veil which hid then, and hides now, the motives that led to this strange surrender on Peggy's part of a character which she undoubtedly held as her own by every claim of Nature and Art: and penetrate the still stranger blindness which permitted Garrick to be led into such a trap,—even by Love!

I have noted the versatility of the company which was this season acting at Drury Lane; but Garrick's talents certainly capped the climax in that direction. One night *Hamlet*, and another *Bayes*, with imitations of living and dead actors. Again, *Richard III*, and the next night *Abel Drugger*. He seems to have acted low comedy without grimace, as he acted tragedy with the modesty of nature, and without strut or fustian. Woffington's versatility, as we have seen, was not a whit less than that of Garrick.

It is amusing in this connection to note the fanciful extravagances uttered by the panegyrists of these two eminent players during their lifetime.

One writer published a pamphlet entitled "REASONS WHY DAVID GARRICK, ESQ., SHOULD NOT APPEAR ON THE STAGE!"* The main reason being that "when Mr. Garrick appears upon the stage" the *writer* is "so blinded by prejudice or admiration, that *he* can see no body else, *he* can hear no body else, and can bear no body else." Mr. Garrick is advised to "quit the stage, because he eclipses all who appear with him on it."

Another rhapsodist† tunes his harp to Peggy's praise in this strain: "Mrs. Woffington is a downright cheat, a triumphant plagiary; she first steals your heart, and then laughs at you as secure of your applause. There is such a prepossession arising from her form; such a witchcraft in her beauty; and to those who are personally acquainted with her, such an absolute command from the sweetness of her disposition, that it is almost impossible to criticize upon her. And yet I am daring enough to affirm she has given

* *Quoted in the London Magazine, October, 1759.*
† *British Magazine, 1747.*

me some pain in her *Cleopatra;* but it wou'd give me greater pain to find fault with her, and therefore I am willing to believe that hint enough to satisfy the most rigid justice, reflecting at the same time on Mr. Gay's delicate remark in his fables:

> In beauty faults conspicuous grow,
> The smallest speck is seen on snow."

It was in the season of which we are now treating, as well as in the previous season, that most of the oft-told encounters between Clive and Woffington took place.

Evidently Kitty fared the worse, as she left Drury Lane for Covent Garden after this year, either tired of the nightly green-room encounter, which the gossips of the time retailed abroad, or unwilling to see her younger rival in comedy walk away with so many of the honors. There was never much love lost between Clive and Woffington.

"A pretty face," said Kitty to Peg one evening, "of course, excuses a multiplication of sweethearts!"

"And a plain one," retorted the ready Irish girl, "insures a vast overflow of unmarketable virtue."

But Kitty Clive had found her market—was married, if not happy; and was, moreover, neither plain nor ugly, unless everyone of the prints we have of her, even when plain Miss Raftor, flattter her beyond measure.

On another occasion, when playing *Sir Harry Wildair*, and coming from the scene with the more than usually enthusiastic applause still ringing in her ear, Peggy ran into the green-room in great glee, exclaiming:

"I really believe half the house take me to be a man!"

"The other half know the contrary," tartly replied the cynical Clive.

And so the "Merry Jest went round," with no bones broken and no blood spilt, but in the coarse style of our most refined ancestors.

But the town still continued madly in love with Woffington; that is to say, the men were in love and the women jealous. There were exceptions, of course, to the rule, and some men of fashion made a point of differing with the majority.

"So you cannot bear Mrs. Woffington," wrote Horace Walpole in one of his letters, "yet all the town is in love with her. To say the truth, I am glad to find somebody to keep me in countenance, for I think she is an impudent Irish-faced girl."

It is this same "Sir Oracle," however, who in later years set his opinion against that of "the town" regarding Mrs. Siddons, whom he "could not think the greatest prodigy that ever appeared," and who displayed "nothing but what good sense and good instruction might give."

The salary which Woffington was receiving this year is stated at £7 10*s.* per week (an amount which would be equivalent to at least three times that sum, or about $100 of money in our time), besides which she was allowed £50 (or about $700 in our day) for her costumes, or "cloaths," as appears from the books, and she was guaranteed £180 for her benefit. Mrs. Pritchard received the same emoluments, but Kitty Clive's receipts were somewhat greater; she had fifteen guineas a week, and was guaranteed £221 for her benefit, though she was only allowed £50 for her "cloaths," as the others were.

Garrick's income from salary and benefits amounted to nearly if not quite a thousand pounds for the season.

It was upon such uneven salaries that Garrick and Woffington began joint housekeeping: that quaint little comedy in real life, of which everyone who came in contact with them has had something to say.

It seems to have commenced after Woffington's return from Ireland at the beginning of this season, and was inaugurated at Macklin's house, where Mrs. Woffington formerly had apartments: No. 6 Bow Street, Covent Garden. Bow Street was not at that time extended through to Long Acre, and No. 6 stood about where the large glass conservatory adjoining the present Covent Garden Theatre is now located, and directly opposite to Bow Street police station, although in the days of Garrick an ordinary brick residence occupied the site of the police court,—and in this identical house Fielding afterwards lived, and while there wrote Tom Jones. It was a congenial neighborhood for the literati of the period. On the corner (of Bow and Russell Streets) stood Wills' famous coffee-house; and around the corner (at No. 8 Russell Street) was Tom Davies' book-shop.

Being continually mated with each other, both in their performances and in popular opinion, the friendship which had arisen between Garrick and Woffington drifted easily into a stronger feeling. This was to be expected. Their kindred tastes, their constant enjoyment of each other's society, the sprightly wit, the fine thought and amiable temperament which marked their natures, in addition to the pre-eminence of genius and fame that lifted them far above all their contemporaries in the dramatic profession, were all matters which not only made their union agreeable but advised that it should be permanent.

It is most probable that at the first Garrick's love was the stronger of the two;—still Woffington undoubtedly grew to be very fond of Garrick.

In the art to which her life and ambition were devoted, Garrick was the greatest ornament.

By the possession of the most remarkable powers ever known to the stage he had won every laurel that could crown dramatic genius. His fame was confined to no one class of people in the kingdom. He was the favorite of the illiterate and the pride of the learned; the most welcome guest in the highest circles in the land, and the hero of the lowest. The honors which had been given to Garrick, the triumphs he had gained, the great esteem in which he was held by all men, had not at this time changed his naturally agreeable and easy disposition. At the height of his fame, when St. James' and St. Giles': when the wits of the most renowned circles and the dullards of the most obscure, alike, regarded him with unqualified approval—Garrick yet maintained the serenity of his mind; and continued to be the most affable when he was the most celebrated of men. His society was sought by the greatest philosophers, statesmen and poets of his own sex; his smiles were coveted by the most accomplished beauties of the other.

In receiving his addresses favorably, therefore, Woffington did only what was agreeable to her nature and what any other woman would have done. She grew to love him in all the sincerity of her character; with all the warmth of her emotional Irish nature. Garrick, on his part, was undoubtedly honest in his affection for her. She was the foremost favorite of the stage when he came upon it. She was young, witty, intelligent

and beautiful: with a wealth of expression and a fund of good nature beyond any young woman of her age. She, too, was sought after by persons "of the first rank and distinction," by men "of the greatest character and most eminent for learning," all of whom felt "honored by her acquaintance and charmed with her conversation."* She was an observant woman, and her contact with good society naturally polished her all the more. She was a great reader of books, and her other self-taught accomplishments fitted her for contact with intellectual society, which she seems to have adorned beyond any of her contemporaries. She was, moreover, as a woman, the least vain of any of her day, and whatever character she had to play, be it old or young, she fitted herself to its requirements, and descended to the level of the circumstances she was to depict.

Madame D'Arblay adds her testimony to Woffington's "home" accomplishments, and I might quote to endless lengths from the pages of Davies, Macklin, Murphy, and other of D'Arblay's contemporaries wherein this testimony is preserved. In the "Diary and Letters," we may read how "in graceful deportment, in natural magnetism and in tact she was a hostess so attractive, that her receptions were crowded by people of distinction, and the table was never presided over so charmingly as when she was at the head of it."† The charm of her manners, the wit of her conversation and the loveliness of her face confirmed in social circles that reputation which her genius had won in the theatre, and made her as much esteemed in private life as in public.

Her portrait was painted by such famous artists as Hogarth, Wilson, Mercier,‡ Eccard and Pond.

The compliment of so renowned a woman's love was something for Garrick to be proud of.

The lavish praises which rewarded their efforts on the stage, and the favorable opinion that continually linked their merits together, joined Miss

---

* *Doran.*

† "*There are unhappily no records of what passed in those evenings at Macklin's house. But with a company so brilliant, wit, erudition and graceful compliment must have whiled away the pleasantest hours that ever were known in London.*"—"*D'Arblay's Life and Letters.*"

‡ *In the Garrick Club; it is perhaps the loveliest face given Woffington in any of her famous pictures: though not so suggestive of the woman of genius depicted in the others.*

Woffington and Mr. Garrick so closely in social estimation that there was no speaking of the one without also referring to the other.

"The lively Garrick," says Fitzgerald in his Life of Garrick, "did not see in her merely what the men about town so much admired, the sauciness and boldness which * * * seeks to captivate by an effrontry of speech and bearing, and a wearisome succession of 'breeches parts,' but was taken, we may be sure, by the half pensive, half sad expression, and fancied an ideal that could be capable of real love and true happiness. Indeed the whole of this *amour*, as it must be called, turns out on examination so different from the vulgar notion handed down by the Macklins, Murphys and others, that it becomes a valuable illustration of Garrick's character.* And it will be shown, and for the first time, that he was all through looking to an honorable attachment, an honorable establishment in life with one whom he could sincerely esteem. Under the follies and failings which he fancied were those of the hour he saw the generous nature, the honest purpose, the warm impulse, the sense of loyalty and duty to her profession which might in time be earnest for her sense of duty to himself. Margaret Woffington, it must be remembered, had many gifts and accomplishments that were of an intellectual sort. She was indeed a captivating creature. She could speak French admirably† and dance with infinite grace, and above all, possessed a kind, generous heart that could do a good-natured thing."

Woffington, with all her genius, was no more than human. It would have been a very cold nature that could withstand a suit so cleverly pressed by a lover of Garrick's fire. She did not withstand it. She accepted David Garrick's affection and gave him her own in return.

Murphy tells us that the engagement between them was generally understood and approved of by the public.

The triangular house-keeping was not of long duration at Macklin's, and the couple most interested in harmonious living moved shortly to South-

---

* *Why not of Woffington's as well—Mr. Fitzgerald?*

† *When and where did she acquire "French"? Did she owe it to Madame Violante's interest in her as a child? None of the records tell us.*

hampton Street, near the Strand,* (Macklin says they "moved to more fashionable quarters"), and here began that oft-sung partnership in household expenses which has become celebrated. Garrick taking charge of house and paying all the bills for each alternate month, and Woffington assuming all the responsibility for the others.

This unique arrangement of the household redounded more to the fame of the hostess than to the host. Mr. Macklin, who came oftenest to visit them in the new house, leaves numerous reflections, in his memoirs, of David Garrick's parsimony in providing for the table during the month of his management.

"In talk, Garrick was a very generous man," says Macklin;† "a very humane man and all that, and I believe he was no hypocrite in his immediate feelings. But he would tell you all this at his house in Southhampton Street, till, turning the corner, the very first ghost of a farthing would melt all his fine sentiments into the air, and he was again a mere manager."‡

Among many other proofs of Garrick's penurious method of housekeeping may be educed the characteristic anecdote of Dr. Johnson.

The great lexicographer was in the habit of spending most of his leisure hours at the hospitable house in Southhampton Street. He met there the people whose educations, talents and eminence were most agreeable to his thought. Dr. Johnson was especially fond of the tea which Mrs. Woffington poured out for him. One night, at the beginning of one of her months of catering, the great man called for his favorite beverage, and upon receiving the cup that the hostess handed to him, Garrick scolded her roundly for making it too strong.§

"It is no stronger than I have made it before," she replied.

"No stronger than usual!" cried out Garrick. "No stronger than usual!" thumping the table angrily with his fist. "It is, madam. All last

---

* *Congreve had lived in Southhampton Street: and died there in 1729.*

† "*Mackliniana*"—*European Magazine, June, 1800.*

‡ *Garrick did not become a manager until 1747. Macklin evidently meant this as the usual actor's jeer at the "managerial" class.*

§ "*Dialogues between Reynolds and Johnson.*" *Satire by Sir Joshua Reynolds, 1816. Also Boswell's Johnson, Vol. VII, p. 100.*

month it would have hurt nobody's stomach. But this tea, madam, this tea is as red as blood."

When Macklin was asked by one of the guests why this monthly change from luxury to frugality of diet happened, he exclaimed with some heat:*

"Happen, sir! It did not happen at all. Mrs. Woffington is generous to a degree, but Garrick, sir, is parsimonious. It is by design, by a studied economy on his part which has marked him through all his life. David Garrick, sir, makes a handsome fortune every year of his life, but is too economical by nature to furnish his table."

"He had then begun to feel money in his purse," said Dr. Johnson to Boswell, "and did not know when he would have enough of it."

The period of joint housekeeping lasted, I think, but two or three years, or throughout the earlier seasons during which Garrick and Woffington acted together at Drury Lane. I am led to this conclusion from the fact that in 1745 we find Garrick living in King Street, Covent Garden: he had quarelled with Drury Lane and shortly after went for a short period to Dublin without her: while Woffington had departed for Paris to study the French art in tragedy (whose high priestess was then the great Dumesnil), and also to place her sister at a convent school. In 1746 Garrick was playing at Covent Garden, while Woffington still remained at Drury Lane. And in 1747 Garrick began his acquaintance with Mademoiselle Violette, and in 1748 married her.

This would give no time later than the end of 1744 for Woffington and Garrick to continue housekeeping together.

Indeed Garrick's love seems to have been a raging fire which soon burnt itself out. There are many reasons why we may give Woffington credit for deeper and more lasting sentiments.

Tempers and dispositions in which generosity and parsimony, sincerity and policy, were so strongly marked as in Margaret Woffington and David Garrick, could not fail but clash at times. Garrick probably grew discontented on noting the favor with which the Woffington month of home-

* "*Mackliniana*"—*European Magazine, May, 1800.*

rule was regarded, and was irritated by the fact that he could not please his guests so thoroughly as his fair partner succeeded in doing. This very likely produced the first breach; and jealousy made the second.

From all the records of the time we have no reason to believe that Woffington evinced any change in her affection for Garrick, or showed any intimation that the proposed marriage between them was growing distasteful to her.

It is certain she entertained sentiments of honest esteem and affection for Garrick. He was possessed of agreeable manners, his person was elegant and distinguished, and his powers, then at their highest point, had not only secured him the greatest remuneration but the loftiest position on the contemporaneous stage. His income must have been treble that of Woffington's: but her spirit of liberality or prodigality very likely shocked his economical instincts at every turn. There was no "saving" anything with such a woman—and David wanted to save. He began to relax in his attentiveness to her. With all the beautiful women in England tempting his favor he could not confine it to one.

Margaret Woffington seems to have taken his fickleness philosophically.

This peculiar state of affairs, however, does not seem to have broken off the engagement of marriage between the two. The accounts that have come down to us contain nothing to show any serious disagreement between the contracting parties up to this period. No sign was evinced by either that the wedding would not ultimately take place.

But in allowing liberty to her lover Peggy demanded a certain degree of freedom for herself, and instead of holding him up to a strict observance of loyalty she accepted the situation on condition that the license should be mutual. This conclusion appears to have been arrived at amicably, and in the independence of her spirit I have no doubt that Woffington did many things which gave her rather the reputation of a woman of wit and *a la mode* than of propriety and prudence. She excused her preference for the society of the opposite sex on the ground that "women never talked to her but of silks and satins."

She was undoubtedly careless of the world's opinion, and was pretty apt to do as she desired. But in her case, as in the case of all actresses of great beauty, there were, beyond question, many scandals afloat that she had done nothing to provoke. In one of her letters she refers to some damaging gossip of this very common kind. The letter is characteristic of Peg Woffington. It is addressed to "Mast^{r} Thomas Robinson at Goodwood in Sussex," and is the only letter in Woffington's hand of which we have any account, though she must have written a thousand.

"My Pretty little Oroonoko—I'm glad to hear of y^{r} safe arrival in Sussex and that you are so well placed in the noble family of Richmond &c.; for which I have y^{e} most profound regard and respect. Sir Thomas Robinson writes me word y^{t} you are very pretty which has raised my curiosity to a great pitch and it makes me long to see you.

I hear the acting-poetaster is wth you still at Goodwood & has had the insolence to brag of favours from me—Vain coxcomb! I did indeed by the persuasion of Mr. Swiney and his assistance answer the simpleton's nauseous lett^{r} —— foh!

He did well, truly, to throw my lett^{r} into the fire, otherwise it must have made him appear more ridiculous than his *amour* at Bath did or his cudgel playing with y^{e} rough Irishman. Saucy Jackanapes! To give it for a reason for ye burning of my lett^{r} that there were expressions in it too passionate & tender to be shewn.

I did in an ironical way (w^{h} the booby took in a litteral sense) complim^{t} both myself and him on the successe we shared mutually on his first appearance on y^{e} stage and that w^{h} he had (all to himselfe) in the part of Carlos* in "Love Makes a Man," when with an undaunted modesty, he withstood the attack of his foes arm^{d} with catt-calls & other offensive weapons.

I did indeed give him a little double meaning touch on the expressive & gracefull motion of his hands & arms as assistants to his energetick way

---

* *During the season previous to this Woffington had acted with Hallam, who then made his first appearance in some years as* Carlos *in "Love Makes a Man." Can Hallam have been the "Jackanapes" she refers to?*

of delivering y^e^ poet's sentim^ts^ & w^h^ he must have learned from y^e^ youthfull manner of spreading plaisters when he was aprentice. There, these I say were the true motives to his burning y^e^ lett^r^ and no passionate expressions of mine.

I play ye part of Sir Harry Wildair to night, and can't recollect w^t^ I said to y^e^ impertinent monster in my lett^r^, nor have I time to say any more now, but you shall hear from me by the next post; and if Swiney has a copy of it, or I can recover the chief articles in it you shall have 'em.

I am (my D^r^ Black boy)
with my Duty to their Graces
y^r^ admirer & humble Serv^t^

MARGARET WOFFINGTON.

Saturday November 19th, 1743.

PERIOD VII.

FROM PEACE TO RUPTURE.

THE theatrical atmosphere about Drury Lane towards the close of the previous season had been extremely hazy. When the season of 1743–44 opened it had increased to storminess. Fleetwood was a high liver, and success, with little labor, had made him careless and reckless. He was up to his neck in debt, and not only were his box-office takings and other receipts attached, but the bailiffs were frequently in possession of the theatre wardrobes, so that the actors often could not get their costumes for the evening's performance without strategy or bribery. Of course, salaries were behind, and in fact so far behind that some of them were quite out of sight and beyond every hope of recovery.

In the midst of such a state of affairs, of course, discipline went to the dogs, and plottings and conspiracies became the business of the moment.

Garrick and Macklin seem to have been at the head of the defection. But it is very probable that Macklin, who was the older and stronger spirit, egged on his younger rival to take part in a movement which would have been an idle dream without him. This was nothing less than to desert from Drury Lane in a body; to form a commonwealth management: and to get a lease of the little house in the Haymarket* which had for many years a precarious existence as a summer theatre: having been everything in turn—tumbling-booth, concert-room, lecture-room and theatre, and nothing long. I do not know if

---

* *The first theatre in the Haymarket (erected on the very site occupied by the theatre of Buckstone and Bancroft fame) was planned by Vanbrugh, and built by him in connection with Congreve in 1705–6. McSwiney, who afterwards became one of Woffington's most devoted admirers, was the original manager, his rent being £5 per day. In 1708–9 he was joined by the Dorset Garden Company after the destruction of their theatre.*

E. HAGTLEY, PINXT

J. FABER, FECIT, 1781.

WOFFINGTON as "MRS. FORD."

Mrs. Clive had been asked to join the conspiracy, but this season finds her departed from Drury Lane and playing at Covent Garden. Woffington undoubtedly must have been solicited, as Garrick was heart and soul in the affair; but she certainly did not countenance the scheme, for she remained faithful to the management, and for a time she was the strongest card that Fleetwood carried.

However, the scheme came to naught. The conspirators secured their theatre, but they could not get a license for their project; the Lord Chamberlain was deaf to their petition, and so the enterprise fell still-born.

The chagrin and disappointment of Garrick must have been great. He must also have smarted under this additional proof of Woffington's good sense. The seeds of the discontent between them must have sprouted about this time.

Failing in the attempt to open a rival theatre in the face of their old manager, the seceding actors entered into a compact by which it was agreed between them that no one of their number was to accept a re-engagement from Fleetwood unless all were taken back. This was strike and boycott combined, quite equal to anything countenanced in these later days by Mr. Powderly's Knights of Labor. Fleetwood after much persuasion offered to permit them all to return except Macklin, whom he looked upon as having been the head and front, the brains and body of the revolt.

In order to allow the rest to fight it out between them, and probably heartily ashamed of his own folly, Garrick accepted some engagements in Dublin, Cork and Limerick, and departed for Ireland, where he remained several months. Mrs. Cibber was also acting in Dublin about this time.

From this distant point the negotiations for his return to Drury Lane proceeded, and the terms of surrender finally settled upon were that all the other actors who had been in the conspiracy with him were to be taken back, except Macklin.

Garrick found himself placed in a delicate quandary, and although many blamed him for sacrificing his friend and companion, still that friend and companion was heartless enough to consider only his own personal safety, and quite

willing to sacrifice to his own selfish interests all the smaller actors whom he had coaxed into his conspiracy, and who would all be deprived of a season's engagement unless Garrick consented to go back and carry them with him.

A very lively quarrel grew out of this, and the case of Macklin *versus* Garrick became one of the *causes celebre* of the stage. Pamphlet and handbill, letter and card, and in short, every means of publicity was resorted to by both parties; so that by the time Garrick returned from Ireland and his re-appearance was advertised on the Drury Lane posters, public excitement had quite reached fever heat, and the partisans of either side were ranged in a battle array, very earnest, very dramatic and exceedingly untheatrical.

Mrs. Woffington, as I have shown, remained true to the fortunes of the theatre, and with her as a leading attraction Fleetwood had been able to gather a fairly good company together; he began his season on the 13th of September. Yates, Theophilus Cibber, Delane, Mrs. Crow, Mrs. Giffard—the wife of the former manager of Goodman's Fields and Garrick's first manager in London—were in Fleetwood's company; but Mrs. Pritchard and Kitty Clive had deserted to Covent Garden, where Quin, Ryan and Woodward were also engaged, joined later by Thomas Sheridan, a heavy tragedian, of the oratorical order, from the Irish theatres, who this season made his *debut* in London. Woffington's performances of *Sylvia* and *Wildair* were potent attractions at Drury Lane until Garrick's return; and she also made her first appearance this season as *Mrs. Ford* in the revival of "The Merry Wives of Windsor," which took place on November 29th.

Merry *Mistress Ford* must have been one of Woffington's most successful performances, as the largest mezzotint which we have of her, engraved in her lifetime, depicts her in this part. This print was reproduced by Noseda, a London print-seller, early in this century, and good copies of this reprint are almost as scarce as the original itself.

The sixth of December came and with it Garrick's first appearance after the revolt. He was announced to play *Bayes* in "The Rehearsal."

His quarrel with Macklin had been kept alive in the public prints, and riot was anticipated. He appeared, but was not allowed to speak.

Macklin's friends were in the majority. "Off!" "Off!" they shouted—and off David had to go. We are not informed how the performance went on. It is very likely that something else was substituted, and Woffington's popularity taken advantage of to satisfy those who remained to see the play.

Two nights later Garrick was again announced for *Bayes*, and this time he was fully prepared for his opponents. Geneste informs us, that Garrick's friends were "joined by 30 *Cruisers*," and brute force won the day; but from that night on (with only occasional adverse demonstration) the performances resumed their legitimate quiet, although the warfare waged quite furiously with ink and paper.*

Peggy acted this season *Ophelia* to Garrick's "Hamlet," and it is to be noted that when this performance was repeated for Garrick's benefit (March 5th, 1744) we have, perhaps, the first instance on record of any portion of the Pit being reserved for "*Stalls*," or as it was announced in the bills of the day, "Five rows of the Pit will be railed into Boxes." Garrick and Woffington also acted *Lord* and *Lady Townly* for the first time this season. The first performance was given for Mrs. Woffington's benefit, and on that occasion the advertisements read that "*Six* rows of the Pit will be railed into Boxes." Among Woffington's last representations this season (which ended with May) were *Portia* and *Lady Anne*, the latter to Garrick's *Richard*.

I find an anecdote in Ryan's Table Talk concerning Woffington's first performance of *Portia*. All her critics agree that her declamation was accurate and her gesture, grace and nature combined; but in tragic or even dramatic speeches, her voice probably had its limits, and in such scenes, being overtaxed, told against her. As *Portia* she appeared to great advantage, but when Lorenzo says "This is the voice, or I am much deceived, of Portia," *Portia* replies, "He knows me as the blind man knows the cuckoo, by

---

* *Macklin opened a School for Amateurs after the contest; he engaged the Haymarket as a class-room, and thus forestalled my friend Steele Mackaye's New York Lyceum; teaching and giving practice to his pupils in the Science of Natural Acting. His method was to bid his scholars first speak the passage as they would in common life, then, giving them more force but preserving the same accent, declaim them from the stage. Foote was one of Macklin's pupils, or at least he made his* debut *with Macklin's Amateur Company.*

the bad voice," the audience laughed outright, and Woffington, conscious of her deficiency, with great good humor joined with them in their demonstration of risibility.

The next season now began. It commenced on the 15th of September (1744) with the most perfect of Congreve's comedies, "Love for Love," and for the first time in her career Woffington appeared on the opening night of the season. She played *Mrs. Frail.* Her next new part was *Oriana* in "The Inconstant."

Mrs. Cibber and Thomas Sheridan were added to the company this season; Sheridan was a new-comer to those boards, but Mrs. Cibber had appeared at Drury Lane nine years previously. Macklin also returned this year, and also Mills. Macklin on the occasion of his re-appearance wrote and delivered an opening address or prologue, in which he expressed open confession and contrition for his former conspiracy.

> From scheming, pelting, famine and despair
> Behold to grace restored an exiled play'r:
> Your sanction yet his fortune must complete
> And give him privilege to laugh and eat.
> No revolution-plots are mine; again
> You see, thank Heaven, the quietest of men.
> Once warned, I meddle not with state affairs
> But play my part, retire and say my prayers.

Fleetwood, however, had again some occasion, this season, to taste the bitter-sweets of management. On account of the increased company and increased salaries he had the temerity to advance his prices of admission, and the result was a riot. Not one riot, indeed, but many. The first demonstration occurred on the 17th of November when Woffington was in the bills for *Phyllis* in "The Conscious Lovers." The play was stopped and Fleetwood was called for. Not being an actor he requested Woffington to represent him, and offered through her to meet any deputation which the audience might send to confer with him, in his own room. The play was then allowed to go on.

The conference, it is evident, was not satisfactory, for when Garrick appeared two nights after as *Sir John Brute* the disturbance was more violent.

The play was not allowed to be acted, the seats were torn up and the rioters even threatened to come upon the stage and destroy the scenes. They were overcome before proceeding so far. Nevertheless the destruction they had already wrought was so great that no performance could be given for a week. Conciliations were made, however, and peace restored. But Fleetwood was now thoroughly disgusted with management. He had triumphed over the conspiracy within his walls, and had again presented to the public a company thoroughly worthy of their support, but when he attempted to get back a little of the additional outlay which all this had cost him he was met with resistance, insult and destruction of his property. His retirement from all active interest in the theatre at the end of this season was a natural outcome of these contests:—especially to a man as easy-going and as fond of comfort, and a martyr withal to the gout, as Fleetwood was.

A couple of rich bankers became the purchasers of the patent or license which now fell into the market, and Fleetwood was allowed £600 a year on the condition that he retired wholly from the concern. The bankers, who merely went into the affair as a speculation, induced Lacy, at that time assistant manager for Rich of Covent Garden, to assume the active management. Thus Drury Lane passed this season from one management to another.

The company seem to have been transferred with the patent, although how they were induced to acquiesce in the transfer has not been reported.

Striking instances of Woffington's good nature is shown in many of the casts this season. In February we find her playing *Belinda* in "The Provoked Wife," to the *Sir John* and *Lady Brute* of Garrick and Mrs. Cibber. At various times she resigned characters of which she had right of possession to others, among these *Lady Townly*, in which she had made one of the most pronounced successes during the previous year.

But toward the end of the season she was destined to face some bitter disappointments and to receive a blow to what we may easily believe to have been one of her dearest hopes and ambitions.

If separate residences mean anything, then we find that in the spring of this year Woffington and Garrick have quarrelled, for they are living apart.

PERIOD VII.

In 1745 Mrs. Woffington is occupying one of those delightful villas at Teddington which have ever-verdant lawns sloping down to the Thames;* and Garrick has a house in King Street, Covent Garden. Woffington has brought her sister back from the French convent school and has provided a lovely home for her in this little Eden upon earth.

It is somewhat difficult to get at the real reasons for the rupture.

We are told by Macklin that the wedding day had absolutely been named and every preparation made for the marriage by Garrick as well as Woffington.

But the numerous stories in connection with Peg Woffington's name made Garrick restive. As the time appointed for the wedding drew near he began to grow impatient with her. His temper became ruffled over things that formerly he regarded with indifference. He especially objected to one of her most devoted worshippers, Lord Darnley, and even found fault, we are told, with her popularity on the stage and in society, and reproached her for the hospitality with which she had received their mutual guests. There is no record to show that Woffington grew out of humor with him on these occasions.

Garrick, however, grew more and more moody. He probably reasoned that he could gain little by this union. It would hurt his popularity somewhat with the feminine portion of his audience.† In addition to these matters he possibly reflected that however high his *fiancee* stood in public esteem as an actress, her private character as a woman was far from being stainless. Another shining illustration of the parable of the *Mote* and the *Beam.*

In this respect, however, she was quite as good as any of the greater

---

* *That lovely stretch of the Thames between Hampton and Twickenham seems to have been about this time, and to a later period, the very paradise of actors. Garrick had a villa at Hampton; Kitty Clive another not far off, and so had half a score of other stage-heroes. Bellamy and Woffington occupied villas at Teddington. It's the old proverb about birds of a feather. In much the same spirit the famous French actors of this century and the last will be found nesting by the Seine, within easy walking distance of each other and convenient to Paris; and the lights of our own stage for a time made Long Branch their abiding-place—where the Booths, the Wallacks, Blakes, Mary Anderson, Maggie Mitchell, and other lights of our own theatre possessed "homes."*

† "*Mackliniana*"—*European Magazine, 1800.*

artists of the stage of that period, and could compare favorably with most of the fine ladies and famous court-beauties of the day. But in the tardy consideration of these facts Garrick became discontented and sullen. On the morning of the appointed day he tried the wedding-ring on Peg's finger.* It fitted perfectly, and she gayly complimented him upon his skill in selecting it. He made no answer to her pleasantries, but continued in such a morose and gloomy disposition that she rallied him on the lack of sprightly manner and flow of spirit usual in him. As her humor became more lively his increased in seriousness. Finally, giving up the attempt to coax him into a cheerfulness she bluntly asked him the cause of his depression. He declared that it was the result of a bad night's sleep. The explanation was made with so much hesitation that Woffington would not accept it.

"And pray was it this," she asked, holding up the wedding-ring he had brought her, "which has given you so restless a night?"

"Why, to tell you the truth, my dear," he said, "as you love frankness, it was; and in consequence of it I have worn the shirt of Dejanira for these last eight hours."

"Then, sir," she returned coldly, "get up and throw it off. I could guess the cause of your dejection. You regret the step you are about to take?"

He made no reply, and after a pause Woffington continued, "Well, sir, we are not at the altar, and if you possessed ten times the wealth, fame and ability that the world gives you credit for, I would not, after this silent but eloquent confession, become your wife. From this hour I separate myself from you except in the course of professional business, or in the presence of a third person."†

This speech, we may be sure, was delivered with all the vigor for which Margaret Woffington was noted. It agitated Garrick so much that for some time he could make no defence. Finally he gained courage enough

---

* *Mackliniana.—Also Ryan's Table Talk, and private MSS. in possession of James McKee, attributed to Macklin.*

† "*Mackliniana*"—*European Magazine, 1800. Also Ryan's Table Talk.*

to address the indignant woman. But all his attempts to soothe her or excuse himself were in vain. Woffington kept her word. She quitted the house and took a separate town-residence in a different quarter of London, eventually settling, as we shall see, at Teddington.

All the presents that had been given to her by Garrick were promptly returned to him. In sending back those which he had received from Woffington Garrick, however, neglected to include a certain pair of diamond shoe-buckles for which she had paid a good sum of money. Some time after the affair she recollected the gift of these, and sent him a polite note as a reminder that they were still in his possession. To this Garrick replied, that as the buckles were all he had to recall his many hours of happiness with lovely Peggy he trusted she would allow him to retain them. Woffington had too much spirit to ask for them a second time and Garrick wore the diamond buckles until he left the stage.*

This episode was soon noised abroad by the gossips and the affair furnished an excellent theme for the wits. A caricature, making sport of David's share in the matter, appeared in the print shops, and gave as much annoyance to the actor as it afforded amusement to the public.

---

* *European Magazine, June, 1800.*

JOHANNES ÆGIDIUS ECCARD, PINXIT

I. FABER, FECIT, 1746.

WOFFINGTON in 1745.

PERIOD VIII.

FROM CONTEST TO CONTEST.

THE heart must have something to occupy it. Love or hate or avarice are ever knocking at its portal. Failing one object we take up another to fill the craving which comes with the first beginnings of reason.

It might reasonably be inferred that selfishness, or its twin dwarf conceit, would grow out of the nature of a woman so universally flattered as Margaret Woffington. Yet all the dramatic writers of a century ago unite in rendering high testimony to the absence of either disagreeable trait in her.

They allude with repeated exclamations of surprise and commendation to the filial care with which, in the midst of flatteries and triumphs enough to turn any other woman's head, she cherished her mother, and to the affectionate and solicitous guardianship she exercised over her younger sister. Margaret corresponded constantly with old Mrs. Woffington and sent her presents as often as she could afford them.* She secured to her mother a regular annuity of forty pounds a year, and paid, in addition to this allowance, for all clothing desired by the old lady.

In O'Keefe's Recollection he tells how great and pleasant a change had come to the circumstances of the widow since she used to peddle water-cress through the back streets of Dublin. "Through the filial affection of her celebrated daughter," he says, "Mrs. Woffington is now comfortably supported: a respectable looking old lady in a black velvet cloak with deep rich fringe,

* *O'Keefe's Recollections, Vol. I. Also private Macklin MSS.*

a diamond ring on her finger, and an agate snuff-box. She has nothing to mind but going the rounds of the Catholic churches and chatting with her neighbours about the fame and goodness of her daughter in England."

Hitchcock devotes a chapter to extolling this excellent feature in Peg Woffington's character and winds up by saying, "Let the rigid who cannot overlook her transgressions imitate her perfections. If they do not choose to give any grains of allowance to the temptations that beset her, and if they cannot think there is any excuse for living like her, let them be careful to die like her."

Or, he might have added, as one of Mrs. Oldfield's memorialists wrote of that rare actress:—

> "When mourning, Oldfield on her death-bed lay—
> Oldfield the fair, the witty and the gay,
> Thus to her friends around her she did cry—
> Live not like Oldfield, but like Oldfield die."

Woffington's sister was a still greater recipient of her generosity: nothing was left undone to give her the finest education that a lady could have. Indeed, Woffington spared no expense to fit her sister for an elevated position in society. Besides paying all the fees of her tuition and maintenance at a famous seminary for young ladies, she furnished Polly with a regular allowance of pocket-money which was greater than that received by any other pupil and equal to the pin-money of many a nobleman's daughter.* When Polly's education had been finished: when she had gained a thorough knowledge of the languages, painting, music and embroidery, as well as such other matters as were deemed essential to a young woman of good family and high position in respectable society, Peg Woffington brought her home and in a series of well considered and carefully peopled "receptions" presented her to some of the most refined and brilliant people in England.† She was especially cautious in the selection of the young *debutante's* associates. Only men and women whose acquaintance was desirable and proper were permitted to meet her.

Lee Lewes tells us that Mary Woffington was in some respects more

---

* *Lewes' Memoirs, Vol. II.*

† *Boswell's Johnson. Also Madame D'Arblay's Diary and Letters.*

beautiful than her famous sister. Her features were more classical, her face had the refinement of one that had been delicately nurtured, and her manners had acquired grace by the mastery of every accomplishment. She was not, however, possessed of the generous gifts which were the distinguishing characteristics of the actress.* Polly appears to have been flippant rather than witty, and lively without being brilliant. She was easily flattered and not of a thoughtful mood. The admiration created by her loveliness and the compliments paid to her by distinguished people soon turned a young head that was not any too well stored with reflective qualities.† She ascribed her quick success in society wholly to her own pleasing graces, and did not realize that she was courted mainly because of the great reputation of her sister.‡ The discovery of this thoughtless disposition gave much anxious concern to Margaret Woffington. It was natural that after her own success on the stage she should consider the theatre a proper ambition for Polly.§ Her friends also urged a dramatic career for the young girl, not only on account of the probability that a histrionic talent so great in the elder sister must be shared in some measure by the younger, but also in view of the surpassing beauty of Polly's face and the grace of her manners.|| With charms so well adapted for the stage they believed that Mary Woffington could achieve a success commensurate with Margaret's if not beyond it.

It has been asserted that Mary Woffington's *debut* took place in Dublin under Thomas Sheridan's auspices. The date given for this event was March 30th, 1744. But there is no warrant for such data. Sheridan at that time was in London preparing for his own *debut* at Covent Garden. It has been furthermore given out that Miss Bellamy, the future stage beauty of that name, also made her *debut* on the same evening, and while she triumphed—Polly Woffington failed. This is, also, mere romance.

As children and in a children's entertainment these two young Misses

---

* *D'Arblay.*
† *Letter from Mrs. Thrale to Mrs. Burney.*
‡ *Taylor's Records.*
§ *Boswell's Johnson.*
|| *Mrs. Bellamy's Apology.*

did play opposite parts, but the occasion was altogether a private one, and took place at their home in Teddington, where the two families of Woffington and Bellamy were residing at the time.*

The circumstances attending Polly's entrance on the stage were particularly favorable. She had received the solicitous training of her sister in a character which the latter had often acted.

The occasion selected for the public *debut* was Margaret Woffington's annual benefit, which took place that season (1744–5) on the 30th of March. "The Beaux Stratagem" was acted, with Garrick as *Scrub* (one of his least successful performances), and *Cherry* was cast to the *debutante*, who was announced in the bills as "Miss M. Woffington," "being her first appearance on any stage." Peggy spoke an original epilogue, written for the occasion. It has not been preserved—more's the pity.

The attempt, however, was a failure. Polly was the possessor of too much vanity and too little intelligence for stage-work. The audience was polite and endeavored to make charitable allowances for her youth and inexperience. But, to Margaret Woffington's infinite disappointment, it was proven beyond any degree of doubt that her sister would never be successful on the stage.

From that moment Peg Woffington planned another career for Polly. Her greater success in the new path will be related in its place.

The season this year did not end until June, but Mrs. Woffington did not perform after the middle of April, and Garrick was seized with an illness, quoted at the time as dangerous, and only played a night or two after Mary Woffington's *debut.* Margaret Woffington lost an old friend by death this year in the decease of Charles Coffey, the author of the farce "Devil to Pay," who had been one of the first persons to take an interest in her when a child.

It is also to be noted as an interesting incident of this theatrical season that Colley Cibber took his *final* farewell of the stage at Covent Garden on the 26th of February (1745). "Farewell" engagements and "farewell" benefits

---

* *George Anne Bellamy made her first appearance in public prior to Mary Woffington's* debut. *It occurred at Covent Garden on the 22d of November, 1744. She played* Monimia *in Otway's "Orphan;" and Quin, who at first fought against playing* Chamont *to "a child"—allowing himself to be overruled by Rich, afterwards became one of her most devoted admirers.*

appear to have been as common to the theatres of the last century as in this: and as long as they continue "profitable," I suppose they will prevail.

Poor old Colley Cibber had long been almost toothless, and had for some time mumbled rather than spoken his lines, but he lived on until 1757, and was finally buried (so Lawrence Hutton tells us in his Literary Landmarks of London) beside his father and mother in the Danish Church in Wellclose Square, Ratcliff Highway, and not in St. Paul's, Covent Garden, or in Westminster Abbey, as some have stated..

The next season, Woffington's fifth in London, began at Drury Lane on the 19th of September (1745), and on the opening night Barrington and Sparks, two of the "juveniles" who with Peggy had been with Madame Violante's troop of Lilliputians when she produced the "Beggars' Opera" in Dublin,—made their first appearance in London. Both came into immediate favor and continued to be metropolitan favorites for many years.

Lacy became manager-in-chief of Drury Lane this year, but it must be confessed that he began his reign amid a sea of trouble. The Jacobite insurrection at the North started in with the season, and Lacy, with keen instinct for a good advertisement quite worthy of some of our modern Barnums, applied for leave to raise a Regiment of Actors in defense of His Majesty's person against the young Pretender.

Notwithstanding this neat bid for patriotic patronage all the theatres were but poorly attended, and Drury Lane as badly as any, in spite of exceedingly strong attractions and of a special revival of "The Nonjuror," which was thought quite appropriate and timely on account of its suggestive political and patriotic hits.

Woffington was taken ill before the play began, and her part had to be read. I fancy the large-hearted Irishwoman may have been a strong sympathizer with Prince Charley, and had little interest in local flings at his expense.

Kitty Clive (who had been without any engagement the previous season, being one of the bitterest of the clique who supported Macklin in his revolt) now came back to Drury Lane, and we find Woffington, with the best grace in the world, yielding the part of *Portia* to Kitty, in which the latter made her re-appearance.

Foote also became a member of the regular company, but only to leave it shortly afterwards to make capital out of his green-point experiences in an extravagant burlesque which he wrote under the title of "Green-room Squabbles." Woffington permitted Foote to make a trial of *Sir Harry Wildair*, but I find that he only gave one performance of the part. Peggy's old fellow-actor in Violante's juvenile corps, Barrington, made great headway this season, especially in such parts as *Teague*, which Lacy had formerly acted with much applause.

Yet nothing seemed to draw. Revivals were given of certain plays of Shakspere: "The Tempest" (Clive must have made a material *Ariel*) and "Measure for Measure," with Woffington as *Isabella* for the first time; still nothing attracted the town. Not even a revival of "The Humors of the Army," with Woffington in a new breeches-part, attracted more than momentary attention. The Rebellion in Scotland claimed all interest as the great Spectacle of the day.

Garrick, who had foreseen the storm, was acting in Ireland most of this season, and there is little doubt that by this time a total separation had taken place between himself and Peggy. When he did return to town (late in May, 1746) he played at Covent Garden for six nights, his terms being no less than an equal division of the profits of his performances. It is thus to be seen that Garrick had at this period arrived at a pretty good estimate of himself and of his value to the theatre. He continued at Covent Garden throughout the following season, and during that term (1746–47) things went from bad to worse with both theatres; especially Drury Lane. The general business of the country was paralyzed. The only house which may be said to have enjoyed "a run" was the Bank of England.

Bankers suffered naturally, and the firm which had backed Lacy was among the first to fail.

Things in general seemed to be at their bluest hue. However, Lacy's company stood by him, and, leading off with Woffington, they waited patiently for better times, and took their salaries as they could get them.

In the midst of all his anxieties Lacy's mind remained level, and out of his troubles he evolved a scheme which brought him triumphantly ahead. Finding no mere salary could tempt Garrick back to the theatre, he hit upon

the brilliant idea of offering him a partnership. The bait caught. It took some time to complete the negotiations, but eventually Garrick was induced to buy a half interest in Drury Lane Theatre, for which (so say Murphy and Davies) he paid £8,000. In addition to his share of the profits he was to have a stated sum every time he acted, and another fixed amount for such literary work as he might do for the theatre. But although all these points were settled within that season, Garrick did not assume control at Drury Lane till the expiration of his contract at Covent Garden, which covered the then current theatrical year.

A new light entered Drury Lane Theatre this season and shone in the talents of a remarkable tragic actor named Spranger Barry, who came that year from Ireland and made his *debut* as *Othello* on the 4th of October (1746).

Barry's success was extraordinary from his very first performance, and at length the English Roscius had a rival worthy of his very utmost efforts. Woffington did not act with Barry until January 3d (1747), when they played *Lord* and *Lady Townly*, and with such an instantaneous and irresistible success that "The Provoked Husband" was acted for seven consecutive times: a rare event in those days.

Woffington and Barry almost duplicated this success when they acted *Lady Percy* and *Hotspur* a couple of weeks later; and also in "All for Love," when he was seen as *Antony* and she as *Cleopatra.*

The town evidently found a new and abiding delight in watching these fresh triumphs of their old favorite Peggy in conjunction with their new favorite, the "silver tongued" Spranger Barry.

From contemporaneous criticism it is hard to decide which was the most admired by the public, Garrick or Barry. I think Barry was for a longer continuous period the favorite of the playgoers of his time, at least his public career is marked by fewer fluctuations of popular favor than that of Garrick; and it is certain that after Barry began to act *Othello*, Garrick dropped the part out of his repertory. In *Romeo* and *Lear*, which they afterwards acted against one other, they had each the most violent partisans, and if it must be admitted that Garrick came out ahead in the press, it is because he descended to curry

favor with the writers of his time: to meet, to solicit, to entertain and to flatter them to a degree never but once since his time paralleled upon the English stage by a favorite actor: one who really could (as Garrick might) have afforded to stand independently and proudly upon his own merits.

This was the last season during his career in London that Garrick acted out of Drury Lane, except for an occasional benefit. He certainly made his farewell nights at Covent Garden most brilliant; especially on the few notable evenings when he acted with Quin and Mrs. Cibber, and pre-eminently when the trio played in "The Fair Penitent," in "Henry the Fourth" and in "King Lear." Garrick made no success as *Hotspur;* he never played it after this season, and finally resigned the part to Barry, whose hit, as I have before noted, was almost phenomenal.

My memorial now brings me to a season of undoubted prosperity for Drury Lane, but also a season of internal bickerings, jealousies and wrangles almost without parallel in the history of that theatre.

The opening night of the season of 1747–8 was September 15th, the play was "The Merchant of Venice." Macklin played *Shylock*, Mrs. Clive *Portia*, and Peg Woffington spoke an original Epilogue.

That famous Prologue by Dr. Johnson—"And we who live to please must please to live," was written for this occasion and intended for delivery by Garrick: but he was too ill to appear, and the verses were printed instead and distributed through the house.

When the modern Roscius returned to Drury Lane, as its chief, he found himself placed in a position which was no less disagreeable to his own mind than to Margaret Woffington's. Garrick had brought with him from Covent Garden his former sweetheart's most envious rivals, Mrs. Cibber and Mrs. Pritchard. In the Drury Lane company Woffington had been already annoyed by the open enmity of Mrs. Clive, and we have every reason to believe that this triumvirate of clever women made the final months of the season a good deal of an earthly hades for Peg Woffington.

That she was subjected to annoyances as bitter as they were habitual is attested by several writers. Mrs. Cibber and Mrs. Pritchard both were Woffing-

ton's open enemies and took every opportunity to vent their dislike before the visitors to the green-room. These ladies, however, were easily silenced by her superior wit and pungent sarcasm. But Mrs. Clive was a more aggravating antagonist.

This actress had for many years prior to Woffington's ascendency achieved popularity on the stage. She seems to have been an excellent actress in a variety of comedy parts, but apparently a genius in none. The youth, the greater beauty, and the persistent success of the fair Woffington had filled Kitty with more than natural jealousy. She lost no chance behind the curtain to smirch the laurels that Woffington gained in front of it.

From the accounts we have of her private life it is possible that Mrs. Clive was a highly disagreeable person to quarrel with. She had a coarse, vulgar nature, and was a perfect mistress of invective. Being a perfectly "proper" woman, as the saying goes, she carried herself as a very superior person to her less "goody" sisters of the theatre. We all know what a sharp thorn the "Paragon of Virtue" can make herself if she be leavened with the pharisaical spirit.

Lee Lewes says that to a conceit inconceivable Clive joined a passionate temper that knew neither government nor reason: with a volume of language such as is only given to her sex: and a command of vituperation that was not hindered by delicacy nor confined by wit.

Kitty Clive, therefore, was a formidable creature to be at odds with. Peg Woffington found her so. The wordy battles between these two ladies were a source of much amusement to those who were permitted to frequent the green-room. The men of fashion and wit took sides in the controversy, as the freak of the moment actuated them, and encouraged their favorites to continual warfare.

"No two women in high life ever hated each other more unreservedly than these great dames of the theatre," says Davies, "but though the passions of each were as lofty as those of a Duchess, yet they wanted the courtly art of concealing them, and this occasioned now and then a very grotesque scene in the green-room. Woffington was well-bred, seemingly very

calm, and at all times mistress of herself. Clive was arrogant, high tempered and impetuous. What came uppermost in her mind she spoke without reserve. Woffington blunted the sharp speeches of Clive by her apparently civil, but ever keen and sarcastic replies. Thus she often threw Kitty off guard by an arch severity which the other could not easily parry."

"Mrs. Clive being naturally quick as well as coarse in her passion," says Macklin, "frequently drew upon her the sarcastic replies of Woffington, who made battle with a better grace and the utmost composure of temper."

The wit and repartee of the green-room in those days was undoubtedly more sarcastic than refined, and more pungent than delicate.

The quarrels of these two clever women sometimes went to further extremes than the limits of language, and, finally, culminated this season when "Henry the Fourth" was produced with Barry as *Hotspur*, Berry as *Falstaff*, and Woffington as *Lady Percy*.

Woffington had consented to play this very slender part out of an amiable desire for the success of the production,—a complaisance which was highly praised by the critics at that time as an instance of fine sense of duty in an actress so famous for her talent.

Mrs. Clive, who was not acting in the drama, gained considerable satisfaction from her rival's slight opportunities for popular favor. At the fall of the curtain she sneeringly condoled with Woffington on the smallness of the part and the scanty chance for applause it afforded. This produced from Peggy a keen retort that made Clive furious. She began immediately to abuse her rival in a torrent of vituperation. Woffington happened to be in no very amiable humor that evening, and Mrs. Clive attacked her at a moment when she was in too angry a mood to defend herself by her natural weapons of wit or sarcasm.

The two women grew more and more savage in their language, and finally Clive struck Peggy.

A blow was too much for her Irish nature to stand: Woffington replied with a resounding smack; and for a few moments the two fought like

Amazons.* The quarrel was taken up by several admirers of the actresses, and in a short time there was almost a pitched battle in the green-room. This created such an uproar behind the scenes that there was danger of the audience, which was just quitting the theatre, being alarmed by the tumult. Mr. Berry, assisted by several of the players, ultimately succeeded in quelling the outburst. But the incident was seized hold of by the papers, and the print-shops made large sales of a caricature of the affair, entitled "The Green-room Scuffle." The affair also found its way upon the stage through the piece written and acted by Foote and produced at the Haymarket, of which I have already made note in a previous place.

Contentions both in front and rear of the curtain were little suited to Woffington's humor. She was possessed of too much spirit, however, to be vanquished by her enemies in the company, or disheartened by outside influences.

It is probable that she would have continued at Drury Lane had not other events happened which capped the previous annoyances of her engagement.

For some time, we are told, Garrick had sought to renew his former friendship with Woffington. But she was true to her first word, and steadily declined to have anything to do with him except in a professional capacity, or in the presence of a third party.

Garrick was stung to the quick by the steady coldness of her manner toward him. And in one of the prints of the day he flung at her a Parthian dart in the shape of another set of verses, which were not by any means akin to his former odes. The lines began—

"I know your sophistry, I know your art,
Which all your dupes and fools control:
Yourself you give without your heart—
All may share that—but not your soul."

And beyond this, Woffington had to sustain less bearable slights from Garrick; slights much more annoying to the *Actress:* new plays produced without her, old plays revived and her former parts given to others. In a revival of

* *Lee Lewes' Memoirs.*

"She Would and She Wouldn't" Mrs. Pritchard was given *Hypollita*, Clive *Rosara*, and Woffington cast to the lesser part of *Flora*.

For these reasons and in a fit of frenzy she abruptly severed her connection with Drury Lane (her name appears for the last time in the bills of that theatre for *Phyllis* in "Conscious Lovers," April 15th, 1748), and she went to Paris for a vacation.

Her vacation lasted several months.

In Paris she did not waste her time on mere pleasure seeking, or in vain regrets. Sensible, clear-headed Woffington again devoted herself to a study of the French stage, its methods, and its possibilities. It was upon this occasion she is said to have made the acquaintance of the great Dumesnil, at that time the first tragic actress of the Parisian theatres.

Woffington profited beyond measure, we are told, by the study of Dumesnil's art, so that on her return to England she felt confident of her ability to portray heroic parts with as much force as she had hitherto given to comedy.

P. VAN BLEECK. PINXT.

WOFFINGTON in 1747.

PERIOD IX.

FROM STAGE TO DRAWING-ROOM.

WOFFINGTON'S companion upon this visit to Paris was her sister. After the failure of her plan for Polly's future, Margaret Woffington thought of little else than an honorable and advantageous marriage for the girl. At a charity benefit given in aid of some worthy object at Covent Garden early that year she had permitted Polly to dance, and there happened to be among the audience one Captain George Cholmondeley, second son to Lord Cholmondeley: a young gentleman of handsome person, but possessed of no estate further than his pay as Captain in the army. This young officer became so enamored of the fair dancer that he very shortly after sought her hand in marriage. The offer was a desirable one only in the matter of aristocratic connection. The young man's wife would be the Honorable Mrs. Cholmondeley, and a member of one of the noble families of England, but her husband could not support a family in the style befitting that position. Peg Woffington had once built hopes of a better match for her beautiful sister. But reflecting upon the very high character of young Cholmondeley, and the dignity of his station in society, as well as the dangers that beset a girl so youthful, so thoughtless and so bewitching as Polly, Margaret thought it prudent to give her immediate consent to their union. The marriage took place soon after the two sisters returned to London from Paris, where Woffington very probably purchased the *trousseau;* and the ceremony was attended by a tremendous company.

Margaret procured them a house in Westminster parish, furnished it hand-

somely and allowed the young couple an income that would maintain their proper position.* Not only was Lord Cholmondeley very irate when he heard that his son had wedded the sister of an actress, but all his family connections shared his disgust.† He posted up to London in haste, in order to devise some means whereby the marriage might be annulled. But a single interview with Peg Woffington changed his indignation into pleasure over the affair. He graciously informed her that her graces, beauty and charm had quite reconciled him to his son's wedding with her sister. "My Lord," she said with a saucy dignity, "I have much more reason to be offended at it than your Lordship, for whereas I had before but one beggar to support, I now have two." Woffington's pride and independence were not surpassed by any high society dame of her day.

Polly immediately bloomed into such a leader of fine society that the "Honorable Mrs. Cholmondeley's" house very soon became the meeting-place of famous and fashionable folk.

In Fanny Burney's Diary are to be found many detailed accounts of the polite world one might discover at Mrs. Cholmondeley's, and of the brilliant company to be met, and the witty conversations carried on there. It seems that soon after his marriage to Polly, Captain Cholmondeley resigned from the army and took clerical orders. He does not appear to have been a man of any very pronounced ability. In none of the writings of the time is he referred to save as the husband of Peg Woffington's beautiful sister.

The "Honorable Mrs. Cholmondeley," however, was the possessor of certain traits of character which speedily made for her a distinct and personal reputation in London. A sharp tongue and a ready, caustic wit seem to have been her characteristics. She very soon showed "the gray mare to be the better horse" in the Cholmondeley household; and, if she is reported correctly by the gossips of her time, did not expend any too much respect or esteem upon her lord and master: she is even said to have openly remarked to her

---

* *Taylor's Records.*

† "*I have been unfortunate in my own family,*" *writes Horace Walpole to Mann about this time,* "*My nephew has married a player's sister.*"

intimates that "he did not know much." This expression, however tinctured with ill-taste, had probably truth in it. Miss Burney writes of him thus: "Mr. Cholmondeley is a clergyman; nothing shining in either person or manners, but rather somewhat grim in the first and glum in the last, yet he appears to have humor in himself, and to enjoy it much in others."

He treated his young wife like a spoiled child, and took in good spirit every impertinent speech she made to him or his friends. Mrs. Cholmondeley impressed those who met her very favorably at first, but eventually wearied them by her incessant chatter.*

Nevertheless, Madame D'Arblay states in her Journal: "I could not have had a greater compliment than making two such women my friends, as Mrs. Thrale and Mrs. Cholmondeley, for they are severe and knowing, and afraid of praising *a tort et a travers*, as their opinions are likely to be quoted. * * * I am not merely prepared but determined to admire Mrs. Cholmondeley. For really she has shown so much penetration and sound sense of late that I think she will finally bring about a union between wit and judgment, though their separation has been so long and their meetings have been so few." And although Madame D'Arblay grew tired and contemptuous of Woffington's sister in later life, she noted that upon meeting with strangers Mrs. Cholmondeley always exercised the same pleasant effect.

This agreeable impression was probably due to Polly's quick comprehension and deftness at flattery. She possessed the seductive blarney of her national nature, and beguiled the senses of each new guest with such pleasing compliments that there was no resisting her wiles. She seems to have played at will, like a butterfly, around the solemnity of Dr. Johnson, only to be pinned to the wall by the flashing wit of Richard Brinsley Sheridan.† This strange, trifling, beautiful woman must have been possessed of more than the common share of insight into men and matters.

At each reception which she attended her chair was surrounded by the brightest wits in the room. Fanny Burney recounts with natural indignation,

---

* *Fanny Burney's Diary.*
† *Boswell's Johnson.*

how at one evening party given by Sir Joshua Reynolds, the Earl of Harcourt and Sheridan paid such constant attention to Mrs. Cholmondeley that the rest of the company were neglected. Dr. Johnson, however, soothed her rage by declaring that Mrs. Cholmondeley was the first who had discovered the merits of "Evelina," whereupon Miss Burney was so grateful that her subsequent diary is filled with the praises of the beautiful Mrs. Cholmondeley, who is repeatedly characterized as "the most clever, charming and entertaining of her sex, and utterly unlike anybody in London."

Horace Walpole, who fully shared Lord Cholmondeley's anger at their relative's so-called *mesalliance*, finally consented to meet and was, at once, captured by the charms of Mrs. Cholmondeley.*

He took his niece to Paris with him and presented her to the Dauphin and Madame du Barri, with much pride in her beauty and sprightliness of manner.† It seems to have amazed many that a woman whose babyhood had been spent in semi-vagrancy on the streets of Dublin, whose father had been a bricklayer and whose mother a vegetable peddler, should have taken a place so naturally among the most elegant and renowned people of a brilliant age. Yet she was presented at court by Walpole, and remained the intimate companion and friend of Dr. Johnson, Reynolds, Sheridan, and their contemporaries.

The early favor of the great lexicographer she had won by frank flattery.

"I dined yesterday with Sir Joshua and met Mrs. Cholmondeley," says Johnson in a letter to Mrs. Thrale, "and she told me that I was the best critic in the world, and I told her that nobody could judge like her of the merit of a critic, and that she crowned me with undying laurels."‡

Dr. Johnson, as usual, did not hesitate to have a grim joke at the expense of a friend. Once at a large dinner-party the ladies were called upon to give their separate toasts. Miss Reynolds, in her turn, proposed the health of Oliver Goldsmith as the ugliest man she knew. At this Mrs. Cholmondeley, who was seated at the other side of Goldsmith, rose up, and stretching across the board, shook hands with Miss Reynolds, declaring that

---

* *Walpole's Letters, Vol. II.*
† *Ibid, Vol. V.*
‡ *Boswell's Johnson.*

although it was the first time they had met she was desirous of a better acquaintance with a lady of such excellent judgment. Upon which Dr. Johnson solemnly remarked:

"Thus the ancients in the commencement of their friendships used to sacrifice a beast between them."

The issue of the Cholmondeley marriage was a family of nine children. Woffington lived to see five of them born. One lies buried with her in Teddington Churchyard. One carried the Woffington blood back into a noble Irish family by marrying Sir William Bellingham. Another one of Peggy's nieces became Maid of Honor to the Princess of Wales (the unfortunate Princess Caroline), and while riding with her royal mistress through Leatherhead, in 1806, was killed by the upsetting of her carriage. One of the daughters had the honor of sitting to Sir Joshua Reynolds for her portrait. From this painting a very fine mezzotint was made, which shows that the strain of beauty remained very strong in this second generation. Mary Woffington survived her sister fifty-one years.

But Margaret Woffington is not yet dead, nor has she yet enjoyed some of her brightest and happiest years. Let us follow her through them.

PERIOD X.

FROM THE FRYING-PAN INTO THE FIRE.

WOFFINGTON fled from Drury Lane for peace and comfort. I regret to say she did not immediately find either—at Covent Garden. She left one house to avoid jealousies and contests with Clive, Pritchard and Cibber; and she accepted a lucrative offer from her former manager, Rich, only to find herself in another nest of hornets—with the malicious beauty George Anne Bellamy as chief.

For some time Covent Garden had been falling behind in popularity. In 1748 Rich's company was not indeed of such inferior talent as to wholly deserve the disfavor with which it had been treated; but no theatre could look for any considerable success when confronted with the powerful attractions offered at that time by Drury Lane, in which the company was so strong that even subordinate parts were assumed by actors possessed of finer talent than that acknowledged in some of the leading people of the other play-houses.

Rich, after contemplating the gradual decay of his theatre, resolved to make an effort to bring Covent Garden once more to the front. He engaged for the season of 1748–9 Mr. Quin, Mr. Sparks, Mr. Delane, Miss Bellamy, Miss Pitt and Mrs. Ward, and finally secured Peg Woffington on her return from Paris. Mrs. Ward* was a new-comer into the theatrical field, and was an exceedingly handsome woman and a good actress, but being of vulgar birth, presented a common appearance on the stage and could not be cast for the character of a lady. Miss Bellamy declares that Mrs. Ward's face

---

* *This "Mrs. Ward" is not to be confounded with the pretty "Sally Ward"—the daughter of Woffington's old Aungier Street manager, who eloped with Roger Kemble and became the mother of Sarah Siddons.*

was beautiful to a degree, but that her figure betrayed "the humbleness of her origin."

The success of Rich's new move did not equal his hopes, I fear; and I fancy that Margaret Woffington soon found that her career was to be no exception to that of every stage favorite who ever lived—at least as far as the fluctuation of popular favor is concerned. Even Garrick himself was yet to know the day (even in the meridian of his powers) when his talents would so pall upon the public that he could not draw a £30 house. This sort of history is constantly repeating itself. In our own time we have had Charlotte Cushman, in the best days of her talent, play for a season to empty benches, yet fulfil an engagement some years later to overflowing audiences. And Edwin Forrest and Edwin Booth, and Charles Kean and Macready have experienced the same fluctuations of popular taste and distaste.

It seems to be a natural law that we should grow weary at one time of that which we have once before embraced and may yet again caress and desire. It is so at least with popular favorites—of whatever profession. There is a tide in their success, and those are wisest who, observing the ebb in time, shall retire for a while of their own will—to float in again at the flow, and probably then reach the haven of fortune.

Woffington's sudden and unexplained departure from Drury Lane had given offence to the exacting public, who never care for reasons when their own comfort is at stake. Her audiences missed something they had been accustomed to, when she left. They did not ask the cause of her leaving. She volunteered no excuse. They chose to consider her as fanciful and freakish, and treasured up a resentment; so that when she invited them to her re-appearance in another theatre she found them reluctant and hard to be coaxed.

The season began on the 21st of September (1748), and Woffington played *Lady Brute* on the opening night. She played in rapid succession *Sylvia*, *Mrs. Sullen*, *Mrs. Ford* ("Merry Wives"), *Lady Percy*, *Jane Shore*, *Lady Townly*, *Rosalind*, *Portia* ("Julius Cæsar"), *Phyllis*, *The Lady* (in "Comus"), *Andromache* ("The Distressed Mother") and *Lady Betty Modish*, besides quite a number of new parts. One of these was in a version of

"Coriolanus," which had been written by Thompson, the poet, who dying suddenly before it was acted, had left his family destitute.

Thompson had been an intimate friend of Mr. Quin and Lord Lyttleton, and these gentlemen, consulting each other about some means to provide for the relatives of their friend, finally agreed that the play which had been Thompson's last work should be produced for the benefit of the author's young sister. Scenery and costumes were prepared at a great deal of expense, and "The Relapse" was taken off on January 13th, to make room for "Coriolanus." In this drama Mrs. Woffington played the character of *Veturia*, an old woman with wrinkled face, preceding it by appearing in more gracious attire as *Bellamante*, in Mrs. Behn's familiar farce (part pantomime, part ballet), "The Emperor of the Moon." The bill ran for six nights, but all the talents of Woffington and Quin, supported by an excellent company, could not enlist the sympathies of the public. Lord Lyttleton was so desirous of having Thompson's piece succeed, that he wrote an Epilogue for Mrs. Woffington to speak, in her own person, in which she had to say:—

> If an Old Mother had such pow'rfu charms
> To stop a stubborn Roman's conq'ring arms—
> If with my grave discourse and wrinkled face
> I thus could bring a hero to disgrace,
> How absolutely may I hope to reign
> Now I am turned to my own shape again.

But, alas, she did not reign—absolutely, or otherwise. George Anne Bellamy—a daughter of Ireland like Woffington, but without one tithe of Woffington's heart or head, her nature or her art—now ruled the public through their eyes, and by her spirit and audacity. She had the advantage of being but twenty, Woffington was thirty. Alas! add ten years to the age of an actress and you halve her attractiveness in the eyes of the unthinking.

The appearance of these amateur Beauties, who make their way to popular favor by a personal "prettiness" and notoriety rather than by any positive talent, is periodic to the stage. In every generation, from the times of Charles the Second, the theatre has been occupied for a brief spell by some

beautiful and well advertised incompetency, who has filled the popular eye for a brief term and presently vanished into obscurity, leaving only a few prints of her time to recall to other generations, even her existence. In the days of the Restoration she was rampant. The stage of Queen Anne saw her disport in the loose comedies of the period, and in the reigns of the Georges she came forth with the features of Bellamy and Baddeley, and Crouch and Sumbel; and even Miss O'Neill is not to be lifted out of this category, which in later days has been increased by a score or more of beautiful Curiosities from Mowatt to Langtry.

Bellamy's pert, coquettish ways lent considerable attraction to some of the lighter roles of comedy. But her conceit was out of all proportion to her talent. She seems to have been utterly unconscious of how vain she was, and is to be found continually discussing her own merits throughout one of the most entertaining memoirs that ever was written.*

One has only to read between the lines of the honied phrases in this book, when Woffington is referred to, to get an insight into the annoyances to which Peggy was subjected by her younger rival.

Tate Wilkinson, writing of this period, says: "At that time no more than two or three of the principals of the company were well dressed, and those not with any variety. Mrs. Woffington's wardrobe had this season only the increase of one tragedy suit in addition to the clothes allotted to her, unless she indulged herself."

Little Bellamy, pretty, clever and spiteful, and possessed of a graceful figure and an expensive taste in dress, had since her return to Covent Garden been enabled to wear (through the indulgence of a wealthy admirer†) the most costly gowns.

It seems to have been the amiable practice of Miss Bellamy to outdazzle Peg Woffington in elegance of attire, by appearing unexpectedly on the stage in a robe that surpassed that of the superior actress. One evening, when Woffington came upon the scene as *Cleopatra*, she discovered that little Bellamy, in the subordinate character of *Statira*, was arrayed in a magnificence of

---

* "*An Apology for the Life of George Anne Bellamy.*"

† *Supposed to have been Mr. Fox, the then reigning Minister of State.*

costume that made the robe of the Egyptian Queen, whose costume had come from the theatre wardrobe, look shabby.

Woffington was naturally quite irritated by this breach of the proprieties, and she sent for Bellamy at the close of the act, and sternly reproved her. The younger, puss-like actress demurely apologized and promised not to wear the gown again. She kept her word. But at the next representation she made her appearance in another costume that was still more costly and equally out of character. This so incensed the hot-tempered Peggy that she drove her rival off the stage, and almost gave her the *coup de grace* behind the scenes.

It has been asserted that the celebrated wash-house sensation of L'Assomoir was, on this occasion, enacted for the first time "on any stage" in the Green-room of Covent Garden Theatre.

The audiences—who knew pretty well the terms upon which the rival actresses lived—were alternately convulsed with laughter or testified their displeasure by calls for Mrs. Bellamy.

But let us hear Bellamy herself relate of this period:

"Being now ready to burst with the contending passions which agitated her bosom, Mrs. Woffington told me it was well for me that I had a *Minister* to supply my extravagance with jewels and such paraphernalia. Struck with so unmerited and cruel a reproach, my asperity became more predominant than my good-nature, and I replied I was sorry that *even half the town* could not furnish a supply equal to the Minister she so illiberally hinted at. Finding I had got myself into a disagreeable predicament," continues Mrs. Bellamy, "and recollecting the well-known distich, that

> He who fights, and runs away,
> May live to fight another day,

I made as quick an exit as possible, notwithstanding I wore the regalia of a queen. But I was obliged in some measure to the Comte* for my safety, as his Excellency covered my retreat, and stopped my enraged rival's pursuit. I

---

* *Comte Haslang—who seems to have been one of the amorous army of admiring followers which devoted itself to the care and comfort of the beautiful Bellamy: "He made me presents of wines and chocolates, etc.," she writes.*

should otherwise have stood a chance of appearing in the next scene with black eyes, instead of the blue ones which Nature had given me."

To vex the leading lady by surpassing her in attire was not the only malice of this young lady, whom even her devoted admirer, Mr. Fox, has happily characterized as "Little Bellamy, a creature as cold as ice and as conceited as the devil."

On the occasion of Quin's benefit, Miss Bellamy, without any warning, took the Duchess of Queensberry, a great patron and lover of the drama, behind the scenes at a moment which was calculated to destroy in any illiberal mind the illusion created in it by the charms of the finest actress in the kingdom: for as the Duchess came upon Woffington, the first thing that struck her view, as Bellamy puts it in her Memoirs, "was the Fair, the Egyptian Queen, with a pot of porter in her hand, crying 'Here's confusion to all order! Let liberty thrive!'"

Bellamy winds up this malicious recital with a *naivete* that is delicious. "Could anything," she asks, "have happened so *mal-apropos*, or have given her Grace so disgusting an idea of the inside of a theatre?"

Such tricks as these, joined to a habit that Bellamy had of bringing her ministerial admirer and several lesser ones into the green-room, made her companionship rather unpleasant for Margaret Woffington.

The actress was so much vexed by the Queensberry incident and by the confusion brought about by the throng of Miss Bellamy's lovers behind the scenes, that, during a subsequent performance of *Isabella*, in the "Fatal Marriage," she caused the green-room doors to be closed against all but those engaged to play in the piece, and compelled Rich to have it announced on the bills of the play that "as any obstruction in the movements of the machinery will greatly prejudice the performance of the entertainment, it is to be hoped that no persons will feel offended at their being refused admittance behind the scenes."

Garrick also found himself obliged to put the same notice on the bills of Drury Lane more than once this same season, and very soon he made a permanent rule excluding every one from the stage and green-room, except those absolutely attached to the theatre.

This was looked upon as a great grievance at the time. It had been, up to this period, the fashion for the beaux and wits to spend rather more of their evenings behind the curtain than in front of it. But while no woman had a keener enjoyment of the pleasures of society, Woffington seems to have had little patience with its intrusion into the hours that she gave to her public duty.

Garrick has had the credit of causing this "Reform" upon the stage, but it will be seen that it had really its origin in a personal contest between these two pretty women, each striving to make her power felt by the other.

Love and Passion, however, came to Woffington's rescue, and for a brief space relieved her of the "femininities" of Miss Bellamy.

Towards the close of the season, while that young lady was acting *Lady Fanciful*, she was called from the green-room by a message sent by one Mr. Metham (of her battalion of admirers), who requested her to give him a word in private. She complied and went to the stage door to see him, when he caught her in his arms, threw a veil over her head, and hurried her out into a carriage which he had kept in waiting.

And that was the last seen of Bellamy, not only upon that night but for the rest of the season. Quin had to make an apology to the audience. Her part was read in the last act. The beautiful George Anne always contended that it was a genuine abduction—but Quin, her best friend in the theatre, always doubted that "running away with a woman who made no resistance" should be called by so "severe" a term.

Nothing further of interest to our subject is to be recorded of this season: but it is to be noted that King, the comedian who afterwards became quite celebrated, and was the original *Sir Peter Teazle*, made his *debut* at Drury Lane Theatre during the year; and that Garrick, failing to induce Quin to join his company, tempted the pretty but insipid Mrs. Ward (whom Quin had described as "a half-baked pan-cake") to desert Covent Garden and go over to his forces.

The next season (1749–50) opened therefore with both of Woffington's envious rivals out of the theatre. Of course the usual cry was raised by friends who wanted to excuse the disloyalty or incompetency of these ladies—that it was Woffington's jealousy which had driven them out of Covent Garden.

I've heard the same foolish cry raised in my own time on behalf of the incompetent, and with as faint a show of reason. Why should the Lioness be jealous of the Cat?

Woffington played *Lady Macbeth* for the first time this season to Quin's *Thane*, and added *Lucetta* in the "Suspicious Husband" to her list of successful characters, and also *Arpasia* in "Tamerlane," another tragic personation; and later in the season, *Lady Jane Grey*, which she acted seven nights successively, and gave a performance of the part which (Wilkinson says) added greatly to her reputation. This play was also "commanded" at Leicester House by Frederick, Prince of Wales, and was acted before the whole Royal Family. Woffington also played *Estifania* this season, a part in which Kitty Clive was unusually well thought of, and towards the close of the season, she acted *Anne Bullen* in an old play which had been thirty years absent from the stage.

Miss Bellamy returned after her long "stage wait" and took up her cue on the 23d of January (1750), when she played *Belvedera* in "Venice Preserved."

Woffington closed this season with a performance of *Sir Harry Wildair;* but although the winter had not been as personally uncomfortable to Peggy as the previous one, nevertheless it was far from pleasant; and many disagreeable things, both before and behind the footlights, which only appeared in the shoot this year, budded and blossomed the succeeding season, and finally stifled by their rank odors all Woffington's life and interest in Covent Garden Theatre, or for the London public.

The company at Covent Garden was much strengthened for 1750–51 by the addition of Macklin (who returned from Dublin) and his wife; also by the engagement of Spranger Barry, who had become discontented at sharing parts with Garrick in Drury Lane; and by the return of Mrs. Cibber, Woffington's old antagonist. Quin and Ryan remained. But over these famous, talented, wilful, and opinionated people the Manager now seemed to lose all control. In trying to satisfy everybody Rich only secured the contempt of his whole company and pleased none.

But of course all these feelings were concealed under smiles and courtesies at first; and to the outer world everything at Covent Garden was harmonious.

Yet the volcano only slumbered. Garrick and his partner, alarmed by the formidable array at the rival house, and the loss of so many of their own choice attractions, began to cast about in the troubled waters. Miss Bellamy was tempted over to Drury Lane by offers of a larger salary, and Quin's loyalty was tried by the most flattering temptations; but that actor, having for a great while been the master in Covent Garden, was in no way disposed to yield his liberty for the sake of association with even so renowned a genius as Garrick. Mr. Quin, therefore, continued with Rich, but in consideration of the active demand for his services, he exacted a salary of one thousand pounds a year. This was the largest remuneration which up to that period had ever been paid to an actor. But between the choice of losing Quin and granting his demands, Mr. Rich thought it better to retain his man.

Garrick was so intimately acquainted with the characters of the different players at Covent Garden, that he felt certain they would not live in harmony for any length of time.

Quin was jealous of the great reputation which Barry had gained both in Ireland and at Drury Lane, while Barry resented the control that Quin airily assumed over the theatre with which he had been for so many years connected. Quin was too proud to accept any suggestions from his younger and handsomer rival; and the latter had too much dignity and spirit to be brow-beaten by Quin.

In addition to the rupture that seemed certain to arise between this couple, there was an equal likelihood, in Garrick's estimation, of a war among the women. Woffington and Cibber had for many years disliked each other cordially, not only for personal reasons in which Garrick himself was concerned; but Mrs. Cibber was envious of the greater fame and wider popularity of Woffington, and Peggy's Irish temper was at all times on the alert, and ready, though not anxious, for a contest with anyone who provoked it. Mrs. Cibber was a woman of finer breeding than Kitty Clive, and she had not the smaller cat-like nature of Bellamy. Woffington found therefore no recurrence in Covent Garden of the former green-room squabbles of Drury Lane. But although the mutual aversion of these ladies had no recourse to invective, it was none the less earnest and bitter. Their dislike did not express itself in a frank

warfare, but was declared by glances, whispers, and in sarcastic and ironic compliments.

Mrs. Cibber knew very well that she was no match for her younger rival in wit, and Mrs. Woffington had too much good sense to provoke open hostility by a fierce attack on her antagonist, although her honester nature writhed beneath the suppression of her justifiable resentments. Mr. Rich in his attempts to bring all these opposing elements together only separated them still further. Davies likens him in this respect to Milton's Chaos—

> "He umpire sat,
> And by decision more embroil'd the fray."

In fact Rich was so destitute of tact in his efforts to maintain order, that he not only increased the ill-feeling of his actors toward one another, but brought it in an accumulated avalanche upon himself.

The old Pantomimist seems never to have shown any very great regard for his more reputable theatrical brethren, and in spite of the money he had made from his dramatic productions he always preferred pantomimes to plays. Indeed, he seems to have had more or less contempt for the mere tragedian or comedian, or anyone in fact who could not turn a somersault through a stage mirror or dance in a harlequinade. He had borne patiently with his company while it was amiable in fellowship, but now, when courtesy was strained to its utmost limit, and the green-room was something like a seething cauldron, Mr. Rich could not hide his disdain for his company, nor could they conceal their contempt for him.*

Quarrels between the manager and his actors were of frequent occurrence. Rich commonly termed Woffington his "Sarah Malcolm," and Mrs. Cibber his "Katherine Hayes,"—likening the ladies, by these names, to a pair of violent women who had been recently hanged for joint murder.† He had never forgiven Woffington and Quin for once refusing to take part in one of his pantomimes, and though making a great deal of money out of their

* *Davies' Life of Garrick, Vol. I. Wilkinson's Memoirs, Vol. IV.*
† *Bellamy's Apology.*

talents, he never ceased to covertly deride and sneer at them. This contemptuous spirit was returned with interest by the company, with scarcely an exception.

Therefore, although the prospects of Covent Garden Theatre seemed so fair, its management did not rest, by any means, upon a bed of roses.

This was the season, by the way, of the famous *Romeo and Juliet* contest between the rival theatres, when Garrick and Miss Bellamy at one house and Barry and Mrs. Cibber at the other divided London into two vast partisan armies. It was also the season when grand pantomime was produced for the first time at Drury Lane, Garrick being resolved to strike a blow at Rich in his tenderest part—for as *Lun* the "Harlequin" our Covent Garden manager had considered himself invulnerable and unconquerable. The light comedian Woodward (afterwards the original Petrucio in the farcified Garrick version of "Taming the Shrew") was cast for the motley hero of Garrick's Harlequinade, which was entitled "Queen Mab," and Woodward's *Harlequin* won the town at once. This so disgusted Rich that he produced no pantomime whatever that year.

To add to Rich's annoyance, a whimsical caricature of the affair came out at the print-shops. It was called "The Steelyards," and depicted a pair of scales: on one side of which were placed Woffington, Quin, Barry and Cibber, while the other held Woodward and "Queen Mab," and represented the little load of Drury Lane far outweighing the great weight of talent at Covent Garden.

Soon after this event, another incident occurred to still further try Rich's temper and bring matters to a focus in his theatre.

During a revival of "King John" at Covent Garden, which this year took the place of the usual pantomime, Mrs. Cibber, who was playing *Constance* in that tragedy, was suddenly taken ill. This was no uncommon occurrence with Mrs. Cibber. She was a woman of delicate physique and not very well fitted to endure the strain of acting, nor the constant study of new characters. Furthermore, she often fancied herself indisposed at times when she was well enough to play. So that, between the reality and the imagination of illness, between maladies of the body and languor of the mind, Mrs. Cibber's appearance on the stage was frequently an uncertain matter.

Her indisposition during the run of "King John," however, was an actual one. Mr. Rich received notification of the fact that she could not perform, at a period too late in the afternoon to substitute another play. He entreated Woffington to take Mrs. Cibber's place and appear as *Constance* for that night. The character was one little suited to her taste. But with the willingness to oblige her manager, and the desire to gratify the public, which had ever been the characteristics of Woffington, she readily consented. When the curtain was lifted she came forward in the costume of *Constance*, and politely offered to interpret that character if the audience would permit her to supply Mrs. Cibber's place during the indisposition of that lady.

"The spectators," says Wilkinson, "instead of meeting her address with approbation, seemed to be entirely lost in surprise. This unexpected reception so embarrassed Woffington that she was preparing to retire, when Ryan, who thought that they only wanted a hint to rouse them from their insensibility, asked them bluntly if they would give Mrs. Woffington leave to act *Lady Constance.* The audience, as if at once awakened from a fit of lethargy, by repeated plaudits strove to make amends for their inattention to the most beautiful woman that ever adorned a theatre."

Mrs. Cibber was not the only one in the Covent Garden company whose frequent indispositions embarrassed the manager and disappointed the audience this season. Mr. Barry very often refused to play on account of his voice. He had a weak throat, and was in such dread of hoarseness that he would not go to the theatre unless the weather was favorable. When he did not care to act he coolly sent a message to Rich, stating that his throat troubled him.

The manager had no resource at such irritating times but to rely on the good nature of Mrs. Woffington, who, in contrast with the other members of the company, was amiability itself. On these occasions of illness among the tragedians the comedies in which the name of Woffington was famous were generally produced.

It was, therefore, natural in her to be annoyed beyond measure at observing that while the future appearances of Mrs. Cibber, Barry and Quin were underlined in large type on the bills, her own name appeared frequently

in obscurity and only with the regular cast of the play. The reason of this strange action on the part of Rich, writes Tate Wilkinson,* seems to have been "partly in his inveterate dislike of Miss Woffington ever since she had declined to act in his pantomime, and partly through the awe in which he stood of Quin and Mrs. Cibber."

In spite of Mrs. Woffington's frequent protest, Rich persisted in his very singular treatment of her name in his advertisements; and the contemptuous way in which her just complaints and her complaisant efforts were received, very reasonably incensed the actress. She notified Rich one day that if he printed her name in this indifferent manner again she would refuse to act as substitute for any of his people. The manager laughed at the threat. He was not yet fully acquainted with the nature of Peg Woffington.

A few weeks after she had expressed this decision to Mr. Rich, "Jane Shore" was billed for Covent Garden. Mrs. Cibber had one of her usual fits of indisposition again. Her character was the next in importance to the *Jane Shore* of Mrs. Woffington, and there was no one to fill her place. The drama was, therefore, taken off and announcement made that "The Constant Couple" would be performed. The public had, previous to this, become irritated by the frequent disappointments they experienced at Covent Garden. The audiences began to fancy that the manager was very badly treated by his company, as indeed they felt themselves to be, and several of the bucks about town met and resolved that on the next failure of a billed performer to appear, popular resentment should be shown as a mark of indignation against the individual and a sign of sympathy for Rich.

Mrs. Woffington, of course, did not know of this, but she had given her warning and she determined to carry out the threat. She peremptorily refused to act *Sir Harry* in this "substitute" performance, and sent word to say that she was sick, and at the last moment "The Miser" had to be substituted for the "Constant Couple."

Rich was furious, the audience was indignant. Woffington only was calm. She had kept her word.

---

* *Memoirs, Vol. III.*

This accomplished, her amiability returned. But upon her next appearance at the theatre in the part of *Lady Jane Grey* the audience manifested their anger strongly at her action in declining to play on the former occasion. Let Wilkinson paint the scene:

"Whoever is living and saw her that night will own that they never beheld any figure half so beautiful since. Her anger gave a glow to her complexion and added lustre to her charming eyes. The audience treated her very rudely, bade her ask pardon, and threw orange peels on the stage. She behaved with great resolution, and treated their rudeness with glorious contempt. She left the stage, was called for, and with infinite persuasion was prevailed on to return. However, she did so; walked forward to the footlights, and told them she was ready and willing to perform her character if they chose to permit her—that the decision was theirs—on or off, just as they pleased—a matter of indifference to her. The ayes had it, and all went smoothly afterwards, though she always persisted in believing that the clique against her was originally formed by Rich's family and particular friends, some of whom she did not scruple to name, though, I believe, she always acquitted Rich himself of any knowledge of it."

And so between her impolitic manager, and the fickle and forgetful public, and spoilt and petulant Mrs. Cibber, and arrogant Mr. Quin, poor Peggy had no happy time of it;—and finally Quin himself took active side against her.

Quin had been long jealous of the superior popularity of Woffington, for, elated by the enormous salary which Rich granted to him, and made vain by Garrick's endeavor to tempt him over to the rival theatre, Quin's conception of his own importance had grown faster than the estimation in which he was held by the public. He allowed himself to be irritated by the applause which Woffington's acting received, and annoyed by the enthusiasm that was excited by her great beauty and grace, and the dislike which these feelings engendered was skillfully increased by the malice of Bellamy, who, although she was now under the management of Garrick, still continued to be the favorite of Quin.

This unamiable little minx seems to have continually fomented discords between Mr. Quin and Mrs. Woffington, and to have done everything in the power of a spiteful and artful woman to make her great rival unhappy.

In this she succeeded but poorly. Woffington would have considered life dull without contention. And nothing sat so well on her humor as to engage in rhetorical warfare with anyone who ventured into the lists with her. In this way she had a great many satiric tilts with Quin, who, from the superiority of his position in the theatre, was accustomed to try his wit on every other member of the company.

Mr. Quin's humor, after the manner of the times, was a trifle coarse. Still he did not always have the best of the fray.

Once when they were acting in "The Recruiting Officer," Quin, who played *Balance* to Woffington's *Sylvia*, had during his dinner drunk a great deal more wine than was good for him—and during the performance his lines slipped him.

"Tell me," said he as *Balance* to his daughter *Sylvia*, "how old was you when your mother was married?"

"What, sir?" asked Woffington, with a merry twinkle at catching her antagonist tripping before the audience.

"Pshaw!" said Quin, still muddled—"I mean how old was you when your mother was born?"—at which the house roared.

"I regret, sir," said Woffington in the tenderest and most filial tones, suitable to the part of *Sylvia*, "that I cannot answer your questions—but *I can* tell you, if it be necessary—how old I was (giving him with full force the proper lines of his part) when my mother died!" at which the house broke into mingled laughter and applause.

Quin was furious—and this added another to his previous motives for disliking our heroine. In conjunction with the others he made Woffington's stay at Covent Garden so disagreeable that she determined to quit the theatre; and, therefore, refusing a re-engagement from Rich, she shook the dust of London from her dainty slippers, and took a sudden departure for Dublin,—"where," as Miss Bellamy remarks, with an insidious sneer, "her beauty alone could insure her success."

SUSANNA MARIA CIBBER.

FROM A PAINTING BY THOMAS HUDSON,
IN POSSESSION OF AUGUSTIN DALY.

PERIOD XI.

FROM POETS TO CRITICS.

BEFORE taking passage with Woffington across the Irish Sea, let us look into the contemporary newspapers and magazines, and see in what esteem she was held as actress and woman at this period.

Tradition has lifted Peg Woffington into a most enviable position among the brilliant women of the last century. It is gratifying to find in the printed outpourings of her critics and her poets a complete endorsement of all that tradition has handed down concerning her.

It will be noted that her severer critics lay much stress upon certain "discordant tones" in her voice, when she acted in tragedy. But it should be remembered what an ordeal that voice must have suffered when as a mere child she was called upon to sing in the plays at Madame Violante's booth, and to act such other rôles as called for a severe strain upon her yet unformed tones. Notes, which in singing may have been admirable, when exerted in declamatory passages will give precisely those dissonant or discordant tones that Woffington's critics condemned, but which cannot have been always prominent, or she could never have become the popular favorite she undoubtedly was.

What voice has been more condemned in our day than Henry Irving's, and yet the peculiar fascination which that singular voice exerts after the first shock of strange elocution passes, proves that the charm in fresh tones is only discovered as we become accustomed to them: as with the taste for new brands of wine, which first offend, then delight the palate.

I question, too, if any voice has been more debated than that of Ada Rehan's. People first hearing it on this side of the Atlantic, in trying to explain its peculiarity, have called it "English." When she first acted in London the same singularity in her tones (even above those of her fellow-artists) struck the English ear, and in their puzzled search for something to express its newness they called it "American." On both sides of the ocean, however, her voice has won its way by a singular clearness, and a variety in its modulation that is now very freely admitted by writers upon contemporaneous theatrical matters.

The tributes paid to the womanhood of Peg Woffington were countless. Even those who disliked her from interested motives or professional envy were forced to confess her charms as a woman and an actress.* George Anne Bellamy, her life-long antagonist, says in her "Apology,"—"when dressed for *Cleopatra* Woffington's beauty beggared all description;"—and continually refers to her throughout the book as "the beautiful Mrs. Woffington."

Davies, while defending Garrick in his conduct towards her, affirms that "Mrs. Woffington was mistress of a good understanding, which was much improved by company and books. She had a most attractive sprightliness in her manner, and dearly loved to pursue the bagatelle of vivacity and humor. She was, furthermore, affable, good-natured and charitable."

In Murphy's history, which is equally favorable to Garrick, the writer proclaims that "The understanding of Mrs. Woffington was superior to the generality of her sex. Forgive her one female error, and it might fairly be said that she was adorned with every virtue. However, truth, benevolence and charity were her distinguishing characteristics. Her conversation was in a style of eloquence always pleasing and oftentimes instructive. She abounded in wit, but not of that wild sort which breaks out in flashes, and is often troublesome and impertinent. Her judgment, however, restrained her within due bounds. On the stage she displayed her talents in the brightest lustre."

Dr. Johnson, who drank tea with her frequently at home, and often listened to the lively wit of the actress in the green-room of Drury Lane,

* *See Murphy and Davies in their books on Garrick. Also Bellamy's Apology.*

acknowledged to Boswell the seductive powers of Peg Woffington, and declared himself afraid of them.

These compliments to the personal graces of the woman are equalled by the praise given to the conscientious sense of duty in the actress.

Tate Wilkinson cannot commend her enough for this feature in his Memoirs, and Victor says in his History of the Theatres: "She never disappointed an audience through three winters in Dublin; and yet I have often seen her on the stage when she ought to have been in bed."

In no instance was she known to refuse her gratuitous services at a benefit in aid of an actor or a public charity. A memorable and graceful example of this is recorded in her dancing in a minuet at a performance given in a rival theatre for the aid of an obscure actor.* Another instance of her good nature is to be found in her playing the insignificant character of *Lady Lurewell*, in support of Mr. Foote's attempt at *Sir Harry Wildair* at the benefit of that gentleman, after his first disaster in the Haymarket.

The comedy of Peg Woffington was not, it is to be presumed, of the style made traditional by those who had preceded her in humorous rôles. To this may be in a measure ascribed the criticisms that were passed upon her method of elocution, apart from the dissonant tones noted in her performance of tragedy which I have already noted.

The fashion before she came to London was to rant over a speech, or give it stately emphasis, and to interpret the lighter emotions of humanity with rhetorical periods and sing-song cadences that provoked the applause of the audience rather than explained the author's sentiments. The simplicity of methods and debonnair graces made familiar to our contemporaneous stage by the younger Matthews, and by Lester Wallack in his pristine days, and followed by younger actors, and notably by our own James Lewis and John Drew, were entirely foreign to the theatre of but a little over a century ago.

From the various opinions bequeathed us by the critics of that day it would seem that Woffington was the first woman to assume a comedy character with ease and speak its lines with naturalness. The innovation was resented.

* *Old playbill, Geneste Collection.*

PERIOD XI.

People who have been long used to the dignified eloquence and polished periods of old-fashioned players are not disposed to approve immediately of easier and simpler systems of acting. The case of Ada Rehan is an excellent proof of this. At first she seems audacious and trifling, and affected in her manner. Probably no person ever felt entirely satisfied with this young actress until they became familiar with her method after a second hearing. The ease and unconscious chattiness of her language, the habit she has of at once ignoring the audience and at the same time taking it into her confidence, the simplicity of her manner and the naturalness of her diction, are all matters that come strangely to one accustomed to the more "theatrical" style of acting which is altogether too common, even in our own extremely "naturalistic" days.

At first her audiences did not comprehend Peg Woffington. The graceful unconsciousness of her manner, the ease and simplicity with which she spoke her lines, and the thorough manner in which she became identified with the spirit and humor of her part, were confusing to the traditions of the stage.

She presented nature in the theatre as it is in every-day life, without adorning it with borrowed plumes. In her comedy she was frank and unconventional and as familiar as people are in ordinary conversation. The novelty of this departure from the usual habit of dramatic reading seems to have offended the artistic sense of some of her critics. Few of them, at the first, approved of her manner of speaking, though they afterwards referred to her voice as the only fault in her acting. It is possible that she may at the outset have still retained some of the brogue of her native country. The velvety Dublin accent is a difficult matter to get entirely rid of, though a flavor of it in a pretty voice is not at all disagreeable. The English probably found objection to this Irish manner of intonation. We hear nothing of complaint concerning Peg Woffington's voice from the Dublin critics: but it is commented upon unfavorably at her first appearance in London.

"*Portia* has fallen to the lot of several capital ladies," remarks a writer in The Censor in the course of an elaborate chapter of criticism, "and indeed she not only requires but merits the exertion of eminent abilities. Mrs. Wof-

fington, whose deportment in a male character was so free and elegant, whose figure was so proportionate and delicate, notwithstanding a voice unfavorable for declamation, must, in our opinion, stand foremost. Her first scene was supported with an uncommon degree of archness; her behavior during *Bassanio's* choice of caskets conveyed a strong picture of unstudied anxiety; the trial scene she sustained with amiable dignity; the speech upon Mercy she marked as well as any one else ever did, and in the fifth act she carried on the sham quarrel in a very laughable manner. To sum up all, while in petticoats she showed the woman of solid sense and real fashion; when in breeches, the man of education, judgment and gentility."

"*Constance*," the same critic continues, in another review, "seldom fails to make a deep impression upon the audience; her circumstances are peculiarly calculated to strike the feeling heart; dull must that sensation be which is not affected by the distress of a tender parent, expressed in such pathetic, forcible terms. Even Mrs. Woffington, who from dissonance of tones might have been called the screech-owl of tragedy, drew many tears in this part, to which her elegant figure and adequate deportment did not a little contribute."

And yet (to instance an endorsement of Woffington's tragic powers) it is recorded that Mrs. Bellamy was so overcome by Woffington's acting of *Jocasta* in the horrible tragedy of "Œdipus," that she fainted on the stage when playing *Eurydice* with her.

This has been set down to affectation—but, as Doran wisely comments, "George Anne was not a lady likely to affect a swoon for the sake of complimenting a rival actress."

The slasher in The Censor has reviled the voices of the three great actresses of that time in a criticism on "Tamerlane." "Mrs. Woffington figured so elegantly in *Arpasia*," he writes, "that her first appearance prejudiced spectators in her favor, but we could never admire her croaking of the part.—Mrs. Pritchard played the *Princess* much better, but had not the necessary softness of voice; Mrs. Bellamy had the proper degree of pathos, but whined."

Peg Woffington had too much good sense not to be conscious of the fact that her greatest power lay in comedy. Although an earnest and diligent

student, she could not be ignorant of the different effects produced by her appearance in tragic and humorous rôles. She cheerfully acted any part assigned to her; but at times the character which she assumed rested on her so uneasily that we find her unjustly blamed, as in the following instance:

"Mrs. Woffington," says one of her critics,* "who has many qualifications of a great actress besides the advantage of one of the finest persons that ever adorned a theatre, is apt to be faulty in suffering the vanity of the woman to mix with the feelings of the actress. I have seen Mr. Garrick in some of the less important scenes of *Macbeth* bestow an attention on the buttons of his coat, which gave the humble attendant at his side an opportunity of shining by a contrast of decent conduct; and Mrs. Barrington, when she played the *Cephisa* to Mrs. Woffington's *Andromache*, deserved a thousand times the applause of her mistress. A decent distress ran thro' all *Cephisa's* deportment; but *Andromache* was in more pain about the setting in her ruffle than the death of *Astyanax* or the ghost of *Hector*."

What would this gentleman have said had he attended the performances of some Star in our day, when the remarkable but ill-advised genius has paid more attention to the straggling hairs of a wig or the hour for medicine—which has been frequently taken publicly before the audience,—than to the emotions of the part.

"Mrs. Woffington is an excellent performer," continues the above writer, "and her comedy characters, which are all of the first class, were never so well performed since the death of Mrs. Oldfield; her *Hermione*, also, is an instance that there was scarce anything she could not do in tragedy. The instance (noted above) was not produced to condemn her, but to put inferior players in mind that they may often profit by the faults of the greater."

One of Woffington's chief merits consisted in the representation of females in high rank and dignified elegance, whose graces of deportment as well as foibles she understood and displayed in the very freshest and most original manner. The fashionable irregularities and sprightly coquetry of *Millamant*, *Lady Townly*, *Lady Betty Modish* and *Maria* in the "Nonjuror" were exhibited

* "*The Actor*," *page 103.*

by her with such happy ease and gaiety, and with such great attractiveness that the excesses of these characters appeared not only pardonable but agreeable.

But she did not confine herself to parts of superior elegance; she loved to wanton with the portrayal of ignorance and absurdity, and to sport with petulance and folly, with peevishness and vulgarity. Those who saw her play *Lady Pliant* in Congreve's "Double Dealer" recollected with pleasure her whimsical display of passion and her awkwardly assumed prudery. As *Mrs. Day* in "The Committee" she made no scruple to disguise her beautiful countenance by drawing upon it lines of deformity and the wrinkles of old age, and to put on the tawdry habiliments and vulgar manners of an old hypocritical city vixen. And as *Phyllis*, in Steele's "Conscious Lovers," she must have been such a soubrette as Moliere would have delighted to invent new deviltries for.

Colley Cibber at the age of seventy professed himself Mrs. Woffington's humble admirer; he thought himself happy to be her instructor; his chief pleasure was to play *Nykin* or *Fondlewife* in the "Old Bachelor" to her *Cocky* or *Lætitia* in the same play.

She acted with undoubted approbation some parts in tragedy, particularly *Hermione* in "The Distressed Mother," and even *Lady Macbeth*, which, to show her proficiency, she played alternately with certain comedy rôles; and she seems to have acquired, as she progressed in life, all the skill in portraying the passions which was so justly admired in the emotional Mrs. Cibber and the stately Mrs. Pritchard.

"Her natural vivacity, joined to her elegant form," says Victor,* "were admirably suited to the higher characters of comedy. This truth was confirmed not only by her *Lady Betty Modish*, her *Lady Townly* and *Maria* in the 'Nonjuror,' but by her great success in the character of *Sir Harry Wildair*, where she appeared in the true spirit of a well-bred rake of quality, and after the death of the celebrated original, Mr. Wilks, she remained the unrivalled *Wildair* during her life. I know many critics would not admit of her power for tragedy; her voice was not harmonized for the plaintive notes of sorrow—yet, with great deference to their superior judgment, her performance of

* *History of the Irish Theatres. Vol. III, page 1.*

Andromache was much admired, where the true spirit of the noble Grecian matron was forcibly and elegantly supported. I could mention other characters in tragedy in which she commanded applause, but at the same time it must be acknowledged her genius was superior in comedy. It was the fashion to follow and applaud her in a very particular manner whenever she appeared in the character of *Sir Harry Wildair*. The approbation was not merely the whim of a winter, but it remained and continued as long as she chose to represent that character; and it must be confessed to her praise as an actress that the ease of manner, vivacity, address and figure of a young man of fashion was never more happily expressed. The best proof of the matter is the well-known success and profit she brought to the different theatres in England and Ireland whenever her name was published for *Sir Harry Wildair*. The managers always had recourse to this lady for this character whenever they had fears of the want of an audience; and indeed, as she never, by her own articles, was to play it but with her own consent, she always conferred a favor on the managers whenever she changed her sex and filled the house."

"Genteel comedy," says Murphy, "was her province. *Angelica* in 'Love for Love,' *Maria* in 'The Nonjuror,' *Mrs. Sullen* in 'The Stratagem,' and many others of that character, were the parts that she adorned with all the graces of action. Above all, *Sir Harry Wildair* raised her to the summit of fame. Wilks had shone in that character without a rival. In twelve years after him Mrs. Woffington undertook the part, and the actors, even Garrick himself, made a voluntary resignation to her. She was the only *Sir Harry Wildair* during the remainder of her life. Her figure was in perfect symmetry, her deportment graceful and sufficiently manly."

"So much has been said of Mrs. Woffington," says Wilkinson, "in *Lady Townly*, *Lady Betty*, etc., that it is needless to mention the elegant figure she made in breeches—she looked and acted *Sir Harry Wildair* with such spirit and deportment that she gave flat contradiction to what Farquhar asserted, that when Wilks died *Sir Harry* might go to the jubilee; and yet so far has his prophecy been fully verified, no male performer, even Garrick, or

Woodward, or Barry, or Foote, succeeded, but all have failed in that part. Mrs. Woffington, however, repeated it with unceasing applause for several years."

From some MS. of contemporary opinion, which was bequeathed to the Garrick Club by Mr. Dame, I may quote the following:

"It must be confessed," writes one critic of her own time, whose effusions have been preserved, "that all ye parts that go with Breeches have not for many years past appeared to such advantage as in her Representation of them. Indeed when she assumes ye man there is such a freedom in her air, such a Disengagement from ye woman, with ye happiness of Being perfectly well made, that it is by no means surprising that she has been followed with such uncommon & universal applause. As to ye other characters she has appeared in (not to mention one of ye most agreeable Figures that has been seen on ye Stage) the applause she has Received may answer for her merit in Performing them. She is eminently Graceful in ye character of *Lady Townly*, *Lady Betty Modish*, *Lady Lurewell*, *Lady Brute*, *The Scornful Lady*, *Mrs. Sullen*, *Berinthia*, &c., &c., &c., all which Incontestably prove her to be mistress of uncommon Genius."

Macklin, though not slow nor chary in admitting Woffington's excellence in her male parts, was loth to admit the propriety of any woman playing them. "There is such a reverse in all the habits and modes of the two sexes, acquired from the very cradle upward," he writes, "that it is next to an impossibility for the one to resemble the other so as to totally escape detection. Garrick, who was a great judge of his art, always thought so, and when the case of Woffington's *Sir Harry* was offered as an exception to this rule, Garrick would not admit it. He said 'It was, no doubt, a great attempt for a woman, but it was not *Sir Harry Wildair*.' It is but fair to state, however, in connection with the great actor's opinion, that Garrick failed disastrously in his effort to play *Wildair*, and may have been somewhat jealous of Woffington's success in the part."

"She tried her powers of acting a tragedy rake, for *Lothario* is certainly of that cast," says Davies, "but whether she was as greatly accomplished in the manly tread of the buskined libertine as she was in the gay walk of

the sprightlier gentleman I know not, but it is certain she did not meet with the same approbation in the part of *Lothario* as in that of *Wildair*."

Another critic, in the London Evening Advertiser, writing of this performance of *Lothario* (in which, by the way, she was only seen in London during the last year of her acting on the stage, when the disease which later brought her career to its tragic close may even then have commenced to make itself felt both in her study and her performance), says: "Mrs. Woffington appeared on the occasion of her benefit for the first time as *Lothario* in 'The Fair Penitent.' The interest which the heart naturally takes in the business of this play was weakened by the consciousness that a woman was playing the part; but we must say that Mrs. Woffington takes off her hat, draws her sword, fights, and dies with such an elegant gallantry that she becomes the prettiest fellow on the stage."

Davies compares Oldfield, Woffington and Clive in a single strong sentence:—

"*Lady Townly*," he writes, "has been universally said to be Mrs. Oldfield's *ne plus ultra* in acting. She slided so gracefully into the foibles, and displayed so humorously the excesses of a fine woman, too sensible of her charms, too confident of her powers, and led away by her passion for pleasure, that no succeeding lady arrived at her many distinguished excellencies in that character, though the beautiful Mrs. Woffington came nearest to her; but Mrs. Clive gave criticism an idea that *Lord Townly* had married his cook-maid: vulgar in the polite scenes, and dissonant in the pathetic."

"The difference," says the censorious author of "The Actor," "between the tragedian and the comedian of a cast, in point of voice, is that one must have a great voice, the other a great command of it. And yet more of this is required in the actress than the actor in the tender scenes of comedy. We have seen more: some men succeed in these parts with only tolerable voices, women never without excellent ones. Mrs. Woffington wanted only this requisite to have excelled all the women in the world."

In the face of these varied opinions and often unduly harsh judgments of her critics, Woffington continued always to be the prime favorite of her

audiences. I have no doubt that many liked her better in some of her performances than in others—but, spite of contemporary familiarity with her methods and artifices, that familiarity which makes stale at times even the most varied talent, she undoubtedly remained until her sudden "taking off" from the stage life, the most popular actress of her time.

And, as we have already seen, she was not less successful in polite Society, than on the stage. Her witty epigrams fell on appreciative ears, and were repeated everywhere in her praise. And to her, more frequently than any of her sex during her lifetime, were sonnets and verses addressed or dedicated, by the beaux and wits of the day.

One of these which I shall quote was written during her last engagement at Drury Lane, and afterwards reprinted in the Gentleman's Magazine.

ON MRS. WOFFINGTON.

Tho' Peggy's charms have oft been sung,
The darling theme of every tongue—
New praises still remain.
Beauties like hers may well infuse
New flights, new fancies to the muse,
And brighten every strain.

'Tis not her form alone I prize,
Which every fool that has but eyes
As well as I can see:
To say she's fair is but to say
When the sun shines at noon 'tis day,
Which none need learn of me.

But I'm in love with Peggy's mind
Where every virtue is combined
That can adorn the fair—
Excepting one you scarce can miss,
So trifling that you would not wish
That virtue had been there.

She who possesses all the rest
Must sure excel the prude, whose breast
That virtue shares alone.
To seek perfection is a jest,
They who have fewest faults are best—
And Peggy has but one!

In the London Magazine of February, 1749, the following lines were also addressed to her:

ON SEEING MRS. WOFFINGTON APPEAR IN SEVERAL TRAGICK CHARACTERS.

Delightful Woffington! So formed to please!
Strikes every taste, can every passion raise:
In shapes as various as her Sexe's are—
And all the Woman seems comprised in her.
With easy diction & becoming mien,
Distinguished shines & shines in every scene.
The prude and the coquet in her we find,
And all the foibles of the fairer kind,
Expressed in characters themselves would own,
The manners such as might the vice atone.
Her taking graces win them new esteem,
They're changed to virtues, or like virtues seem.
If tragic airs in solemn strains she shows,
The pitying audience feel the mimick woes,
The soft affection swims in gushing tears.
We weep the ills of twice two thousand years:
When warlike Pyrrhus woos th' afflicted fair,
Then all Andromache's displayed in her.
The springs of nature feel her powerful art
She moves the passions & she melts the heart.
Her noble manner all the soul alarms
When sorrow shakes us or when virtue charms,
Sincere emotions in each bosom rise
And real anguish knows no mock disguise
Who would not beauty's falling fate deplore,
Who sees her faint & droop & sink in *Shore!*
The dying fair excites such gen'rous pain,
What bosom bleeds not when she begs in vain!
Extreme distress so feelingly she draws
She seems to challenge—not to court applause.
Secure of worth, not anxious of her claim,
She coldly draws a careless bill on fame.
The noblest sentiments by her display'd
In all the pomp of Milton's Muse array'd,
Emphatic beauties from her hand receive
Adorned by graces which they used to give.
Envy herself distorted tribute pays,
And Candour spreads & Justice crowns her lays.

FROM POETS TO CRITICS.

To fit the marked characteristics of Peg Woffington's voice, prologues and epilogues were especially written: each to suit her method of delivery. She had achieved a considerable reputation by the grace and simplicity with which she delivered these elocutionary features of the drama. She rendered them with so much expression and grace that the poets and dramatists of her time rivalled one another in composing verses for her to speak.

"I shall leave Mrs. Woffington to proceed in the path of Merit, where she still leads," says Chetwood, "with an Epilogue wrote purely for her manner of speaking. And as Prologues and Epilogues are the most difficult tasks of both Sexes on the Stage, it is to be remarked but few besides the Principal Performers are trusted with them; & a good Prologue & Epilogue have often help'd a bad Play out of the Mire & at least sent the Audience home better humoured."

There is quite a rare print extant, depicting Woffington in the delivery of the Epilogue thus referred to by Chetwood. It must have been issued at the time of the Jacobite Rebellion, when Lacy offered to enroll all his company into a regiment of Volunteers to protect His Majesty the Second George, who was then on the throne. The title of the print reads as follows:

"*AN EPILOGUE*

Designed to be spoken by

MRS. WOFFINGTON

In the Character of a Volunteer.

Enters, Reading a Gazette."

The verses are rabidly anti-popish and quite as wildly patriotic. It is unnecessary to perpetuate all of them—and a sample will suffice to give the taste of the whole:

Curse on all cowards, say I! Why bless my eyes!
No, no, it can't be true; this gazette lies—
Our men retreat before a scrub banditti
Who scarce could fight the buff-coats of the city?

Well, if 'tis so, and that our men can't stand,
'Tis time we women take the thing in hand.
Thus in my country's cause I would appear
A bold, smart *khonen hollered* Volunteer,
And really mark some heroes in the nation!
Ye'll think this no unnatural transformation—
For if in valour real manhood lies,
All cowards are but women in disguise.

* * * * * * *

Shou'd these audacious sons of Rome prevail,
Vows, convents, and that heathen thing, a veil,
Must come in fashion, and such institutions
Wou'd suit but oddly with our constitutions.
What gay coquette would brook a nun's profession?
And *I've* some private reasons 'gainst confession.

There are many notable portraits of this beautiful creature in the galleries of England and Ireland. Some have been made familiar to us through well-known mezzotints; others are not so familiar to the general eye.* The Dublin Society Rooms possess a fine kit-kat painting of her by Latham. The artist has drawn her attired in the character of some theatrical personage. She wears a hat in the picture, and is dressed in a green silk domino, trimmed with white lace. In his portrait Latham has made an especial study of Mrs. Woffington's hands, which were considered models of slender beauty. The Garrick Club has four portraits of her, painted by Wilson, Eccard, Mercier and Hogarth. Hogarth's picture discloses the actress at full length, reclining on a couch, with a book in one hand and a miniature in the other.† The same artist also painted a half-

---

* *Through the kindness of Mr. J. Challoner Smith I am able to present in this volume photogravures of some of the rarest of these old mezzotints. The full-length copy representing Mrs. Woffington as Mrs. Ford is taken from an original print of exceptional rarity—only four being known to exist. At the recent sale of Mr. Smith's collection of mezzotints his copy of this old print brought forty pounds under the hammer. Francis Harvey, of St. James Street, London, had sold a copy only a few months previously for twenty-five pounds.*

† *A recent writer in the Fortnightly Review, describing the pictures in the Garrick Club of London, may be quoted, as he gives a good idea of two of this bewitching woman's portraits (permission to copy which has been uniformly refused):—"We see her, in the Garrick, the versatile, bewitching and whimsical Irishwoman, well portrayed in several canvases. There is a Hogarth in the drawing-room which represents her on a couch, 'dallying and dangerous,' as Charles Lamb wrote of this picture; a lovely recumbent figure in a reddish-brown dress,*

length portrait of Woffington as *Sir Harry Wildair*, which was formerly in the collection of Lord Lansdowne. Another portrait of her by Hogarth, and a miniature by Hone, were until recently in the Lonsdale Gallery, which was sold under the hammer in 1887 when that collection was dispersed.* A later one by Arthur Pond, painted during the closing period of Woffington's life, was presented to the National Portrait Gallery at South Kensington, by Sir Thomas Martin. It represents her reclining on a couch, with her head encircled with the frill of a coquettish night-cap. It was probably the last picture ever taken of this lovely woman.

It is to be regretted that we have no particulars of Woffington's acquaintance with Hogarth. To judge from the number of different portraits evidently painted from the original subject by the great artist, there must have been a more than common sympathy between the two. Woffington was undoubtedly a friend, and possibly a patron of the artists and *literati* of her day, for her name is to be found printed among the subscribers to many of the "special" and "first" editions issued in her time.

---

with tiny white-slippered feet outstretched. The colour of the picture is somewhat dark and perished, but the face is rendered with that special aptitude for beauty which is not a sufficiently well recognized attribute of the great caricaturist. Close by is another Woffington, painted by a less famous hand, that of Mercier, possibly less truthful, but certainly more beautiful. His work is exceedingly fresh, and in looking at this charming portrait of Woffington, with its lovely face, its dark expressive eyes and engaging aspect, we can understand the empire she exercised over men's hearts."

** Austin Dobson, in a recent number of the Magazine of Art, discoursing upon certain portraits of Woffington, refers to "one in the Jones Collection at South Kensington which represents her in the flower of her beauty, wearing the coquettish lace cap she loved, with lace at her shoulders, her elbows, and round her apron. She has a pet bird upon her shoulder, and her brown, unpowdered hair is turned behind her ears. Upon her forehead the artist has been careful to indicate that tiny lock which Hogarth in the 'Analysis' affirms to be so especially seductive." "But," he writes, "the painter of this likeness is unknown." This portrait, or a copy of the same, was catalogued in the recent Lonsdale sale at Christie's in London (1887), as by Hogarth, and was billed as such to the purchaser. A fair print of this picture, with another depicting her as an invalid, after a painting by Pond made a year before her death (1758), were recently published in the Magazine of Art, and are given in this book by permission of Messrs. Cassell & Co.*

PERIOD XII.

FROM TEDDINGTON TO SMOCK ALLEY.

GARRICK had been married to the fair Violette three years before Peg Woffington went to Dublin; therefore chagrin at being jilted by her former swain for another 'fair' could not have been one of the causes, as some asserted, of her shaking the dust of London from her slippers—and once more seeking her native isle. It is certain that when Woffington reached Dublin she had no engagement. If she had any thought of acting she could have had no immediate prospect of it—nor any thought of the years which would elapse before she would again tread the quiet lanes of her beloved Teddington. It is likely that, worn out and heart-sick with the contentions of the past few seasons, she was only too glad to fly as far as possible from the scenes of that warfare, and her heart guided her back to her mother's side and to the scenes of her girlhood. What woman of the world, in the midst of the cares and cankers of superficial life, has not yearned for the peaceful, assuring caress of an absent mother's loving hand, or the quiet of her childhood's home!

Among many welcoming lines addressed to this gifted woman upon her return to Ireland, I find the following in the London Magazine of September, 1751, though evidently written by a fellow-countryman. It is called "A Song on Mrs. Woffington's *Visit* to Ireland in July, 1751." It is apparent that the writer had no idea that the subject of his Apostrophe had come to stay.

THE FEMALE VOLUNTEER: OR, an Attempt to make our Men STAND.

An EPILOGUE *intended to be ſpoken by Mrs.* Woffington *in the Habit of a Volunteer, upon reading the* Gazette *containing an Account of the late Action at* FALKIRK.

PLAGUE of all Cowards, ſay I—why bleſs my Eyes—
No, no, it can't be true—The Gazette lies.
Our Men retreat! before a Scrub Banditti!
Who ſcarce could fright the Buff-Coats of the City!—
Well, if 'tis ſo, and that our *Men* can't *ſtand*,
'Tis Time we Women take the *Thing* in *Hand*.
Thus in my Country's Cauſe I now appear,
A bold, ſmart, *Kevenhuller'd* Volunteer;
And really, mark ſome Heroes in the Nation,
You'll think this no unnat'ral Transformation:
For if in Valour real *Manhood lies*,
All Cowards are but Women in Diſguiſe.
They cry, theſe Rebels are ſo ſtout and tall!
Ah lud! *I'd lower the proudeſt of them all.*
Try but my *Metal*, place me in the Van,
And poſt me, if I don't—*bring down my Man.*
Had we an Army of ſuch valorous Wenches,
What Man, d'ye think, would dare attack our *Trenches?*
O! how th'Artillery of our *Eyes* would maul 'em.
But, our *mask'd Batteries*, lud! how they would *gall 'em!*
No Rebels 'gainſt ſuch Force dare take the Field;
For, d--mme, but we'd *die* before we'd yield.
Jeſting apart—We Women have ſtrong Reaſon,
To ſtop the Progreſs of this Popiſh Treaſon:
For ſure when Female Liberty's at Stake,
All Women ought to *buſtle* for its Sake:
Should theſe audacious Sons of *Rome* prevail,
Vows,--CONVENTS,--and that heathen Thing--the VEIL
Muſt come in Faſhion. Oh! ſuch Inſtitutions
Would ſuit but odly with our—CONSTITUTIONS.
What gay Coquet would brook a Nun's Profeſſion?
And I've ſome *private* REASONS 'gainſt Confeſſion.
Beſides, our good Men of the Church, they ſay,
(Who now, thank Heav'n, may *love* as well as pray)
Muſt then be only wed to cloiſter'd Houſes,
Slap then we're nick'd of 20,000 Spouſes;
Faith, and no bad ones, as I'm told: then judge ye,
Is't fit we loſe our BENEFIT of CLERGY?

In Freedom's Cauſe, ye Patriot-Fair, riſe,
Exert the ſacred Influence of your Eyes;
On valiant Merit deign alone to ſmile,
And vindicate the Glory of our Iſle;
To no baſe Coward proſtitute your Charms,
Diſband the Lover who deſerts his Arms:
So ſhall you fire each Hero to his Duty,
And *Britiſh* Rights be ſav'd by *Britiſh* Beauty.

LONDON: Printed for M. MOORE, in *Pater-noſter-Row*, 1746. Price Six Pence.

MRS. WOFFINGTON in "AN EPILOGUE."

Lavinia, whom so long we mourn'd,
With mirth and beauty is return'd.
Again she gilds Jerne's plains
And cheers anew its drooping swains.
Now joy o'er ev'ry visage spreads,
And ev'ry plant her influence sheds;
The fields their verdure fresher show;
The flowers with richer colors glow.
Where'er she treads there pleasure moves
The graces there, and there the loves.
The semblance in each part is seen
Her face, her shape, her angel mien.
But who can say the fond surprize
The heav'n that glances from her eyes?
Ah! there bewitching softness dwells
More binding than e'en magic spells.
Ah! could we stay the lovely maid
Or would some pity'ng pow'r persuade
Her here forever to remain,
To give us golden days again,
And gently o'er our hearts preside
Our flocks, our lawns and what beside,
Then blest our time would glide away
Happy beneath her downy sway.

Mr. Thomas Sheridan, the father of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, was at that time manager of the Smock Alley Theatre. The house in Aungier Street was fallen into decay, and the Crow Street Theatre had not yet been thought of. Smock Alley, therefore, was not only the most fashionable, it was the only theatre in Dublin where a respectable talent could with honor to itself accept an engagement. The reigning star of the Dublin stage at this time was Mrs. Bland, afterwards the mother of the famous Dora Jordan.

Colley Cibber had sent to his friend, Sheridan, and to the latter's stage-manager, Victor, many extravagant eulogies of Mrs. Woffington before she quitted Covent Garden. "But as that very happy, singular old gentleman," says Victor, "retained the air of a lover long after he was seventy, we attributed his encomiums on this lady's perfections in tragedy to the excess of his passion for her."

However, Sheridan was persuaded, after much hesitation, to make the experiment of engaging so expensive an artist. The terms finally agreed on were four hundred pounds per annum and, in addition to this, the entire proceeds of two special nights as Benefits during the year.

Sheridan had not seen Mrs. Woffington act for many years, and he had then thought her in no way superior to his very popular leading lady, Mrs. Bland. But at the close of the first performance, on which occasion "The Provoked Husband" was acted, with Woffington in Oldfield's great part of *Lady Townly*, he acknowledged that Bland was obscured. The extraordinary esteem in which the people of Dublin held her performances, and the profit that came to him through the entire engagement, speedily convinced him that the opinion of London on her merits was a correct one, and he soon joined the throng of her admirers, ever afterwards maintaining that Woffington was the greatest actress in the world.

"It was at this era," writes Macklin, "that Woffington might be said to have reached the acme of her fame. She was then in the bloom of her person, accomplishments and profession; highly distinguished for her wit and vivacity: with a charm of conversation that at once attracted the admiration of the men and the envy of the women."*

Mr. Sheridan was not only a very excellent actor himself (though somewhat stiff and pedantic, if judged by the standard of to-day), but he was also an excellent judge of acting in others. He was noted too, for the courtesy of his manners and the generosity of his nature. Peg Woffington, therefore, had as much reason to congratulate herself on gaining the many advantages of his management as Sheridan had cause to be proud of such an accession to his theatre.† That each was justified in regarding the other amiably was soon made evident. Sheridan's theatre on the first night of the return of Dublin's "lovely Peggy" was crowded to the doors, and this enthusiasm of the people continued without abatement as long as she remained in the city.‡ By four of her performances, viz.: *Lady Townly*, *Maria*, *Hermione* and

---

* *European Magazine, May, 1800.*

† *Victor's History of Theatres.*

‡ *Ibid.*

Sir Harry Wildair (each played ten times), the receipts of Smock Alley Theatre were over four thousand pounds, an amount that had never before been equalled by any theatre with old stock plays.

During the first year of her stay at the Smock Alley Theatre the manager ascribed her great popularity in a measure to the novelty of her performances, and the curiosity and patriotic enthusiasm of her townsfolk. But at the close of the third year of Woffington's engagement in Dublin the receipts had fallen off only three hundred pounds from the amount taken in during her first season.*

In a letter to the Countess of Orrery, dated October 21st, 1751, Victor writes:

"Woffington has been the only theme in or out of the theatre. Her performances were in general admirable. She appeared in *Lady Townly*, and since Mrs. Oldfield I have not seen a complete *Lady Townly* till that night. In *Andromache* her grief was dignified and her deportment elegant. In *Jane Shore* nothing appeared remarkable but her superior figure. But in *Hermione* she discovered such talents as have not been displayed since Mrs. Porter. In short, poor Bland is inevitably undone. For those fools, her greatest admirers, who had not sense enough to see her defects before, now see them by the comparison."

During her first season in Dublin Woffington was worked hard, in an extensive repertoire, exhibiting every phase of nature from *Lothario* to *Mrs. Day* (a grotesque old woman's part), both of which she acted for the first time in Dublin; while she also appeared in several new roles, and alternately revived those in which she had made a brilliant reputation. Her list of parts thus included *Phyllis*, *Cleopatra*, *Lady Betty Modish*, *Rosalind*, *Zara*, *Sir Harry*, *Charlotte*, *Hermione*, *Jane Shore* and *Donna Hypolita*: certainly a broad and varied range of characters for any one woman. During her entire engagement in Dublin Woffington never once offered the excuse of a real or pretended illness, but appeared at each performance and acted her part faithfully and with her accustomed spirit. In addition to this adherence to the

* *Victor's History.*

commands of duty, Woffington played at twenty-four benefits, given during her third season to relieve the poor or in aid of some worthy object.* So that the high reputation which she gained from this Irish engagement was earned by this glorious woman through earnest and conscientious effort.

Affairs in London during Woffington's first year in Dublin were not such as to delight the heart of anyone having the highest interests of the theatre at heart. Rich, who had expressed much chagrin the previous year at being outdone by Garrick in his own special field of pantomime, this season quite recovered himself and regained every inch of ground he had lost. He produced a pantomime entitled "Harlequin Sorcerer" with very remarkable results. Wilkinson says "There never was anything before like the rage for it. The doors had to be opened three hours before commencing to relieve the streets about Covent Garden of the crowd. It made Garrick and Old Drury tremble—for all they got was the discontented 'overflow' of children and the grown-up masters and misses who failed to get in to see the pantomime."

For the first time this season (1751–52) all theatres in London were closed during Holy week, or, as it is called, Passion week; a practice that was maintained until within the past year or two.

During the first year of Woffington's stay in Ireland Owen McSwiney, formerly one of the managers of Drury Lane and a man of considerable wealth, having made his will in favor of Peggy, very accommodatingly died. He had been not only her devoted admirer but a warm friend for many years, and had watched her continued successes on the stage with fatherly pride. McSwiney, being desirous to secure her in a comfortable income during her life, had invested his fortune in consols, so that she should receive from it two hundred pounds a year. This bequest he made, however, with one stipulation. McSwiney being a Protestant, by his will declared that in order to benefit by its provisions she must renounce the Catholic faith to which she nominally belonged.

It is probable that Woffington had no very strong predilections toward any particular church. It does not seem from the opinions which were

---

* *Victor's History; also Hitchcock's Irish Stage.*

expressed at the time that she had any scruples about accepting the legacy and fulfilling its conditions.

To observe the requirements of the testator, at Christmas Mrs. Woffington and Mr. Sheridan took a holiday and journeyed together down to the manager's country seat at Guilca, some fifty miles from Dublin. Here they were met by a clergyman of the Episcopal Church, whose parish was situated in so remote and lonely a spot that he had been dubbed the Primate of the Mountains. To this divine Peg Woffington made her recantation of faith, and was formally received by him into the Established Church. The act might have been performed in Dublin, of course, but Woffington, probably, did not wish to have the matter public lest it should mortally offend her mother and perhaps injure her popularity among the devout Irish people.

The mysterious affair occasioned a fine scandal in the capital. Sheridan's wife had not accompanied the pair in their trip to Guilca. She was fully acquainted, however, with the object of their visit, but, in accordance with the request of her husband, had not mentioned it, and as she had full and deserved confidence in Sheridan, was much amused by the pother which the gossips made over the matter. The Dublin scandal-mongers seized hold of the incident and tortured it into an elopement of manager and actress. I can imagine with what blazing head-lines such a circumstance would be heralded in some of the prurient prints of our own day. The complexion thus put on their visit to the country was quite satisfactory to the interested parties, however, both of whom were conscious that a scandal so absurd would be less detrimental to the actress than a discovery of the real purpose of her going to Guilca. In this I believe they judged correctly.

After a little excitement the matter was forgotten, and Peg Woffington continued to enjoy the undiminished favor of her audiences, and McSwiney's legacy. Mrs. Bland left Smock Alley before the second season began, and Woffington remained not only without a rival, but really without adequate support. However she filled the house at every performance.

At the beginning of the second year of her engagement Sheridan voluntarily doubled her salary. He had profited so handsomely by her services

during the past season that he could very well afford to pay her eight hundred pounds a year. But to increase the original sum of four hundred per annum to this large amount, of his own accord, attests not only the manager's generous nature but his keen perception of the talent and attractiveness of his star. With so fine an income, which was further increased by her two yearly benefits, Woffington could now indulge her hospitable tastes without restraint, and she did.

Her private life at once became luxurious. She procured a handsome equipage with a pair of powdered footmen; and devoted much of her income to the lavish entertainment of her friends. This was, perhaps, the most brilliant period of her life. Her hospitality was reciprocated in a generous measure by the poetlings, who filled the public prints with verses in her praise.

She was not, perhaps, received at the Castle, nor were receptions given in her honor by the leaders of society; but these were social honors the absence of which fretted Woffington very little. During the whole course of her life she had never sought the society of her own sex. Women, she said, talked of nothing but silks and scandal; they were not so broadly educated as their brothers, and could bring fewer ideas and less learning into a conversation. Besides, strangers of their own sex who seek the acquaintance of actresses seldom do so with the intention of honest friendship. This Woffington knew too well; and as honesty was the keynote of her character, she naturally shunned those who lacked it. Moreover, her associates since girlhood had been bright wits and poets and statesmen; and she had enjoyed the sparkle and dignity of their society too much to be satisfied by the tattle and gossip of merely fashionable women.

In gathering around her the cleverest men of the capital she was satisfied to be ignored by some of its women. The graceful ease of her manner, the wit of which she was the acknowledged mistress, and the hospitable way in which she entertained, immediately secured for Woffington in Dublin the position that she had occupied in London.

"To Miss Woffington's honor be it ever remembered," writes Hitchcock, "that whilst thus in the zenith of her glory, courted and caressed by all ranks and degrees, she made no alteration in her behavior, but remained the

same gay, affable, obliging, good-natured woman to every one around her. Not the lowest performer in the theatre did she refuse performing for at benefits. Such traits of character must endear Woffington's memory to every lover of the drama."

An amiable instance of Peg Woffington's natural kindness of heart is related of her stay in Dublin at this period. The maid, who had waited upon her faithfully for several years, was engaged to be married to a young tradesman of the city. It is related that one morning before the wedding, Woffington called the girl into her chamber and said: "You have served me with integrity, and it is time for me to make you some recompense. You are now going to be married to an honest man, and since he is of some substance it is not fit that you should go to him penniless. Here is something to begin your new score with, and I want you to accept it as a token of my regard." So saying, she placed a purse containing one hundred guineas into the maid's hand, and dismissed her with many wishes of happiness.

It was at this period of Peg Woffington's career, also, that the oft-repeated Gunning incident occurred.

Maria and Elizabeth Gunning were Dublin beauties of good family and connections, but poor as Poverty. Their mother and old Mrs. Woffington, I presume, had become cronies. However, on one occasion there was to be a grand vice-regal reception at the Castle, and these young ladies had invitations to attend, but no dresses fit to wear on such an occasion. At her mother's solicitation Peg Woffington came to the rescue. She loaned the beauties a couple of her stage court costumes, and thus arrayed in the finery of the theatre, they attended the ball, and, like Cæsar: came—saw—and conquered. It must have amused Woffington to think that if she was not asked to the Castle, her dresses went and helped to paralyze the entire assembly.

Later Mrs. Gunning and her beautiful daughters crossed over to London, where they became the sensation of the day, and of them Horace Walpole wrote:

"There are two Irish girls of no fortune, who are declared the handsomest women alive. I think there being two so handsome, and both such perfect figures, is their chief excellence, for singly I have seen much handsomer

figures than either; however, they can't walk in the park, or go to Vauxhall, but such mobs follow them that they are therefore driven away."

Both girls married into the British aristocracy. Maria Gunning became the Countess of Coventry and Elizabeth Gunning could be afterwards addressed as the Duchess of Hamilton! though she married the Duke in such haste that it is said the couple were forced to use a bed-curtain ring, instead of the commonly accepted circlet of gold. And thus Peggy may be said to have furnished the first outfit for a couple of the peeresses of England.*

There is in the British Museum the original of a curious old broadside or tract which was printed in Dublin about this time. The name of the author is not known. But I have thought it of sufficient worth to give it in these pages, wherein I have endeavored to gather everything relating to Woffington that might give variety and interest to the matter—which, I fear, has received no other advantage from the present writer.† The verses are called:

---

* *These marriages of the beautiful Gunning girls were the great society topics of 1752. Maria married the Earl of Coventry, and Elizabeth took for her first husband, on St. Valentine's Day, 1752, the sixth Duke of Hamilton. The elder sister was eighteen, the younger seventeen, when these marriages took place. The beauty and the luck of the Gunnings was the theme of conversation in coffee-room and drawing-room. Politics were only a bad second in public estimation, for they outranked in the gossip of the day even Miss Jeffries and Miss Blandy, two murderesses, who were hanged at Newgate that same year. "The general attention," says Sir Joshua Reynolds, "is divided between the two young ladies who were married and the two young ladies who were hanged."*

Notwithstanding her exceeding beauty, Maria Gunning, Countess of Coventry, was accustomed to use cosmetics to such an extent that she seriously affected her health thereby. In 1752, the year in which she was married, and when the "Gunninghiad" was at its height, she had already had the seeds of disease sown in her constitution by this most pernicious habit. In 1759 she died suddenly of rapid consumption and paralysis. She was the elder and more beautiful of the two sisters, and the very year she died her portrait was painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Elizabeth Gunning, Duchess of Hamilton (who also had her portrait painted by Sir Joshua), took for her second husband Colonel John Campbell, Lord Lorne, afterwards fifth Duke of Argyll.—Illustrious Irishwomen.

† *For much laborious research and the collection of data for this work I am indebted to Miss Jean Gordon and to Mr. Hillary Bell, and I take occasion in the present note to thank them for their very valuable assistance.*

THE CONTEST DECIDED.

ADDRESSED TO MRS. WOFFINGTON.

The Muses having lately met
To settle their poetic State;
The Sock and Buskin 'gan to spar
(For Females still were fond of War)
And of each other Jealous grown,
Resolved to pull each other down!

Yet all, the Motive, must commend,
'Twas which was Virtue's better Friend,
Whose scholars too could represent
Best what the Muse and Poet meant.
Elate with Hope they take the field,
And armed with Reason scorn to yield.
As conscious of superior worth
First stepp'd the Buskin'd Heroine forth;
Her solemn Air & sable Train
Were Prologue to her Pompous Strain.

'Tis mine, she said, in Courts to shine,
By me the Hero grows divine;
'Tis mine to crush the haughty Great,
And raise the modest to his Seat;
To strike the guilty Mind with Fear,
And from the Harden'd force a Tear;
To raise, depress, or melt the Heart
(Mine—SHERIDAN'S and GARRICK'S art),
With heroes I adorn the stage,
And into virtue charm the age.

Here interposed the Comic Maid:
But still your subjects are the Dead,
You show what former worlds have been,
In me the present Age is seen;
Like me, if you would banish Crimes,
Hold forth a Mirror to the Times.
Besides, how little were your Power,
Was Folly left to reign secure?
For Folks are now not over nice,
But soon from Folly step to Vice;
To mend Mankind you must begin,
And teach them first to fly from Sin.

If PRITCHARD or if CLIVE deride,
Pert Dulness drops its saucy Pride;
And those who laugh at Reason's Rule,
Smart at my strokes of Ridicule,
For Fools ill brook the name of Fool.
Thus quarrel'd they like Man and Wife,
But thus APOLLO ends the Strife:

Rivals no more contend for Fame—
By differ'n't means your End's the same,
And lest these Players should divide You,
Let my Advice and Wisdom guide You;
You two against them all combine,
And ev'ry Pow'r to one assign,
Blend Spirit, Softness, Taste, and Sense,
And from a finish'd Excellence—
Be this the Darling of your Care,
And make your Choice among the Fair.

They strait agreed, but left the Choice
To rest upon his Godship's Voice,
Who, glad to bid the Quarrel cease,
Named WOFFINGTON, and all was Peace.

Another poet contributed the following to one of the Dublin papers, and it was introduced by the editor as "written by a gentleman of some eminence in the literary world."

"ON MISS WOFFINGTON.

Whilst you, the pride and glory of the stage,
At once improve and please the giddy age:
The well played character our wonder draws,
And still attention marks with due applause.
Explore the theatres—how very few
Express the passions which the poet drew!
Mad with the love of praise the actor tries,
Like Bayes to elevate and to surprize,
And women oft, whose beauty charms alone,
Neglect the poet's part to play their own.
But you each character so close pursue
We think the author copied it from you.

True judge of nature! justly you despise
To practice tricks by which so many rise.
Hail then! in whom united we behold
Whatever graced the theatres of old:
A form above description, and a mind
By judgment temper'd and by wit refin'd.
Cut off in beauty's prime when OLDFIELD died,
The Muses wept and threw their harps aside—
But now resume the lyre, amazed to see
Her greatest beauties far outdone by thee."

The kindly esteem of the Dublin public evinced by these methods, and emphasized in this way toward its favorite actress, made Woffington's engagement at the Smock Alley Theatre so very advantageous to her, in many ways, that she appears at one time to have felt satisfied to end her career in the city in which it was begun.

There seemed no possibility of her popularity waning in Dublin, and Peggy might have continued under Sheridan's management for an indefinite number of years had she confined her attention to matters within her own theatric sphere. But she suffered herself to become prominent in a position which, although apparently social in its character, involved her in the unfortunate disputes which national feeling in Ireland has so often engendered. In an evil hour she was elected President of the Beefsteak Club, and through that distinction not only did Margaret Woffington come to grief herself, but her manager and his theatre were likewise involved in ultimate destruction.

PERIOD XIII.

FROM CLUBS TO FIREBRANDS.

THE entire episode of the Beefsteak Club and Woffington's connection with it—being the one semi-political incident of her career—must have a separate chapter.

The Duke of Dorset, in the years 1751–3, was Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. His intimate companion and trusted counsellor was Lord Sackville, afterwards Lord Germaine. These gentlemen loved a joke and valued an epigram more than they relished serious government. From the chronicles of the time, it appears that the Duke and his merry Court spent more hours in the pleasures of good company, than in managing the affairs of the country over which they ruled.

Sheridan's theatre was then the resort of people of taste and refinement, and the home of genius and sprightly humor. To its performances his Grace of Dorset extended constant patronage. He gave his friendship to Mr. Sheridan, who was a man of broad education and fitted to shine in the most polished circles. Woffington was also a great favorite of the Duke. Her graceful wit and exceptional and expressive beauty completed the amiable impression which had been formed in his Grace's mind by the power of her acting. At that period the approval of the Castle was of material benefit to the theatre. The fashion being set by the Duke and Duchess, the cream of Irish Society flowed into Smock Alley. Sheridan was fully conscious of the value of this vice-regal patronage for his house, and decided upon what he thought was an astute plan to gain it still further.

A. POND. PINXT. JAS. R. AMSDELL, SCULP.

WOFFINGTON IN HER PRIME.

It had been sometime his custom, in imitation of a practice much in vogue among the managers of the English theatres, to give a weekly dinner to a few intimates (selected from among the leading members of the performing company, as well as from their strongest friends on the other side of the foot-lights), at which the bills for the ensuing week were discussed and the casts settled. There were seldom over half a dozen at such gatherings, however, and in the earlier and original Saturday night suppers which Rich of Covent Garden instituted, but two or three of his cronies were ever invited. Mr. Sheridan resolved, as a politic move, to make a departure from their limited character. He fitted up a large dining-hall in his house in Dorset Street, adjoining the theatre, and served a luxurious dinner every Saturday night, to which were invited in alternate couples his leading actors, and in larger numbers the greater patrons of his play-house. Smock Alley Theatre was at this time in such excellent reputation that the Duke of Dorset and his friends were glad to receive and accept an invitation to dine at Sheridan's Saturday table. The name of The Beefsteak Club was given to this social affair, and as the dishes were always elaborate and the company of the best, it speedily became quite the desirable event of one's life to be counted among the elect, at least once in the season. Sheridan's idea was perhaps a clever one. It has been followed up by dinner-giving managers and convivial theatrical "stars" in our own time with even greater notoriety.

Peg Woffington was the only woman admitted to these famous dinners, and so desirable did her company become, that in 1753 she was unanimously elected President of the Club. With so beautiful and witty a governor and with such sumptuous repasts, the Beefsteak Club soon became an important and enviable institution. Matters of Church and State were in time debated at table, and the affairs of Ireland came to be considered primarily in Dorset Street rather than in the Castle.

Over this dazzling assemblage of the gods and Muses, over the wits, the poets, the dramatists, the artists, authors, statesmen and courtiers of the Island, Peg Woffington presided with an ease and tact that were not only most agreeable to the company but honorable to herself. As the ruling

officer of so many brilliant and laughter-loving people, she justified their choice by a poetical appeal from the Chair which she addressed,

TO HIS GRACE THE LORD-LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND, &c., &c.,

As the

HUMBLE PETITION OF MARGARET WOFFINGTON, SPINSTER.

May it please your Grace, with all submission,
I humbly offer my petition:
Let others with as small pretensions
Teaze you for places and for pensions,
I scorn a pension or a place,
My whole design's upon your Grace.
The form of my petition's this—
I claim, my lord, an annual kiss—
A kiss by sacred custom due
To me and to be paid by you.
But lest you entertain a doubt,
I'll make my title clearly out.
It was, as near as I can fix,
The fourth of April, 'forty-six—
(With joy I recollect the day)
As I was dressing for the play,
In stept your Grace, and at your back
Appeared my trusty guardian MAC;*
A sudden tremor shook my frame—
Lord! how my color went and came.
At length, to cut my story short,
You kiss'd me, sir, heav'n bless you for't,
The magic touch my spirits drew
Up to my lips, and out they flew,
Such pain and pleasure mixed, I vow,
I felt all o'er, I don't know how.
The secret, when your Grace withdrew,
Like lightning to the greenroom flew,
And plunged the women into spleen,
The men receiv'd me for their queen,
And from that moment swore allegiance—
Nay, RICH himself was all obedience.
Since that your Grace has never yet
Refused to pay the annual debt.

* *Owen McSwiney.*

To prove these facts, if you will have it,
Old MAC will make an affidavit:
If MAC'S rejected as a fibber,
I must appeal to COLLEY CIBBER.
By good advice I hither came
To keep up my continual claim.
The duty's not confin'd to place,
But everywhere affects your Grace,
Which being personal on you
No deputy, my lord, can do.
But hold! say some, his situation
Is chang'd. Consider his high station.
Can station or can titles add
To DORSET more than DORSET had?
Let others void of native grace,
Derive faint honors from a place.
His greatness to himself he owes
Nor borrows lustre but bestows
That's true, but still you answer, wide,
How can he lay his state aside?
Then think betimes, can your weak sight
Support that sudden burst of light?
Will you not sicken as you gaze
Nay, haply perish in the blaze—
Remember SEMELE who dy'd
A fatal victim to her pride.
Glorious example! how it fires me!
I burn and the whole God inspires me—
My bosom is to fear a stranger,
The prize is more enhanced by danger!

It is not written in the minutes of the Beefsteak Club whether his Grace yielded to his fair petitioner, but it is extremely probable that he did.

The Club continued to have the high approval of the wits and beaux who attended its dinners, but it soon fell into disfavor with those who had neither coats to their backs nor food for their stomachs. Mr. Sheridan, being the projector of the Club, and sustaining it at his own expense, became soon the chief object of popular discontent. And then the fickle populace was irritated by the conduct of Woffington, who, it was argued, having sprung from their own streets, had no right to make merry with the

Saxon oppressor. while her brothers and sisters in all parts of Ireland lacked the common necessaries of existence. Party-feeling ran so high that threats began to be made by the populace against Sheridan and his theatre.

The manager, having the Court on his side, laughed at these mutterings.

In January, 1754, he rehearsed the tragedy of "Mahomet" and announced an early evening for its production. The selection of this drama was an untimely one. It contained many passages that were likely to inflame the anger of the mob, already irritated enough. Sheridan received warning that the performance of this play would lead to the gravest consequences, but he neglected the counsel of his wiser friends and produced the piece at the promised time.

In this action Mr. Sheridan does not appear to have been actuated by any considerations of party spirit. "Mahomet" had been selected for production long before popular discontent had attained its present importance. He was simply following the programme of plays that had been laid out for his theatre, and he had received enough tokens of esteem from the public to tempt him into a belief that nothing further than a protest would be raised by the performance.

In this conclusion the manager was incorrect. One can never tell what spark will light the worst passions of a mob, and especially a political mob. The Dublin crowd had no valid grievance against Sheridan. For years the manager of Smock Alley had been the most popular person in the city. But his close connection with the Castle, and the entertainments he gave at the Beefsteak Club to the Duke and his satellites, was worked up into a grave offence in the minds of the disaffected. Sheridan was warned of the gathering cloud, but did not realize that it presaged so great a storm. He resolutely produced the objectionable play at the advertised time, Saturday, February 2d, 1754, and acted the principal role of *Taphna*, with Peg Woffington as *Palmira*, Mr. Digges as *Alcanar*, Mr. Lowden (who afterwards became the lessee of Smock Alley) as *Mahomet;* and a cast of very fair merit completed the bill.

Smock Alley Theatre was filled that night with such a crowd of people as it had seldom held before. The pit, the boxes, the galleries and aisles were packed to their uttermost, and Dorset Street was thronged with those

who could not gain standing-room inside the theatre. Folks of every condition of life were there. The masses of Dublin looked down grimly from the galleries on the Duke and his little coterie: on the fashionable ladies and exquisites of society; while their party-leaders thronged the pit and waited to give the signal of condemnation. The curtain went up in silence, and the performance of the tragedy began. No disturbance occurred until Digges in the inferior character of *Alcanar* spoke the opening lines of his part:

> "If ye powers divine!
> Ye mark the movements of this nether world
> And bring them to account, crush, crush those vipers,
> Who, singled out by the community
> To guard their rights, shall for a grasp of ore
> Or *paltry office*, sell them to the foe"

This was marked as the cue for action. *Alcanar* had no sooner ended this speech than the house was filled with uproar. Stamping, cat-calls, whistling, thundering applause and shouts of "Bravo!" and "Encore!" rewarded the effort of the actor. Mr. Digges was amazed and embarrassed. His character of *Alcanar* was a very insignificant part in the drama, and had never been greeted with approval before. In response to the general demand, however, he repeated his speech, and made way for the greater players. He was recalled by a renewal of the enthusiastic plaudits, and forced again and again to repeat his invocation. Sheridan's finest flights of oratory and admirable acting in *Taphna* were received in silence. Peg Woffington endeavored to invest the part of *Palmira* with more grace than were ever before shown in it. Nothing pleased, however, and the audience would only applaud when Digges appeared. The curtain was finally rung down and the lights turned out.

As he saw that this had been made a party business, Sheridan laid the play aside for a month; but on March 2d it was again announced for representation. The day before it was to be acted Sheridan called his company into the green-room and commented at great length upon the unfortunate occurrences which had marred the previous performance. Digges asked to know what his manager's wishes were with reference to his part on the next per-

formance. Sheridan answered that he gave no directions, but left him free to act as he thought proper. Digges then said: "Sir, if I should comply with the demands of the audience, and repeat the speech, as I did before, am I to incur your censure for doing it?" "Not at all," replied the manager, "I leave you to act in that matter as you think proper in the interest of all concerned."

The evening of the second performance arrived, and the theatre was again thronged to the walls by a crowd whose passions were inflamed by what they considered the manager's contempt for them, in withholding the play so long from repetition. The speech of *Alcanar* was applauded with a vehemence even greater than that of the previous occasion. Mr. Digges stood motionless for a long time before the foot-lights while the house was filled with all the clamor that could be produced by an angry mass of people. At length he made a signal, by the uplifting of his hand, that he desired to speak, and when silence was accorded him he said with manifest confusion, "It would give me great pleasure to comply with your request for a repetition, but I have private reasons for begging to be forgiven * * * You should excuse me as my compliance would be injurious to me."

Upon hearing this the audience immediately called out as vigorously as before, "Sheridan!" "Sheridan!" "Manager!" "Manager!"

Digges quitted the stage hurriedly, and the uproar still continuing, Mr. Sheridan, who stood nervously in the wings, ordered the curtain down and sent out the prompter to state that if the audience would permit it the play would be concluded in a satisfactory manner.

The prompter's words were drowned in an increased clamor of noises, and he was obliged to withdraw without completing his commission. The cries for "Sheridan! Sheridan!" were kept up with ever increasing fury. But the manager was so terrified by the fierce tones of the audience that he believed they intended to wreak personal violence on him, and he declined to go out. His sedan-chair was therefore hastily summoned, he threw off his stage attire, dressed himself, and hurrying to his conveyance was taken home through a back street.

The tumult in the theatre growing louder every minute, Woffington offered to go in front and appeal to the audience. But her appearance only added fresh fuel to the flames of discord. She was known as the President of the Beefsteak Club and a prime favorite of the Duke. On her appearance before the curtain a howl of derision arose, and neither her beauty, her sex nor her pleading gestures could gain silence from the enraged multitude. She retired at length in great embarrassment, and Digges, being the apparent favorite of the audience, came forward to address them. He declared that Mr. Sheridan had laid him under no injunction not to repeat his lines, and that the manager could not on that account have incurred the displeasure of his patrons. This was of no avail.

The cries for Sheridan were still kept up vehemently. Mr. Digges assured them that Sheridan had gone home. Upon which one of the leaders in the pit arose and stated that, having waited so long for the manager to come forth and answer for himself, they were willing to wait an hour longer, but appear he must.

A messenger was despatched from the green-room to Sheridan's house with this message, but no arguments could prevail on Sheridan, now thoroughly demoralized, to return to the theatre.

The audience was as good as its promise. The Duke and his followers and the fashionable people slipped away secretly during the turmoil, but all the others stayed until the time given for Sheridan's appearance.

At the end of the hour two of the party-leaders climbed out of the pit and into his Grace's box. One of them stood up in view of the audience and cried out: "God bless his Majesty King George, with three huzzas."

This seems to have been the pre-arranged signal for action.

In a moment the scene had changed into Pandemonium.

Cheer after cheer rang through the house, and the work of demolition was begun. The curtain was pulled down, the boxes destroyed, the seats uprooted and broken, and the scenery dragged from its recesses and broken into splinters and the canvases torn into shreds.

The terrified actors fled to their homes, and two hours later there came

forth from the ill-fated house a throng of dust-covered, disorderly men, leaving behind them the desolated ruins of the famous Smock Alley Theatre.

The rage of the mob was fierce while it continued, but its fury did not last long. Having punished the temerity of Mr. Sheridan in this summary manner, it was willing to forgive and take him back into favor again—after learning how innocent he was of any real offence. But Sheridan sensibly enough desired no more of management. He declined to have anything further to do with the theatre, and surrendered its use, after it had been somewhat restored to sightliness, for a series of benefits to his actors.

What remained of Smock Alley Theatre was re-opened in March, 1754, under the patronage of the Duke of Dorset, with the tragedy of "All for Love."

The other actors were fearful to be the first to tempt fate again after their recent experience of the mob, but Woffington, reckless and ever confident, allowed her name to go up for the occasion, and it was denominated her "benefit night." The result proved that "Be bold—evermore be bold" was her adage, and that the fair and brave Woffington did not over-estimate her influence with her former devotees, the public at large. Peace was conquered, and for the remainder of the season, which was entirely devoted to "benefits," she acted, as Hitchcock has already told us, for twenty-four out of the twenty-six which were given.

All writers who have commented on this season's work give the fullest and freest praise to Woffington. There is only one exception—Digges! In a pamphlet full of amorous letters which he addressed to Mrs. Sarah Ward (afterward the mother of Mrs. Siddons), he is quite bitter in his references to Mrs. Woffington—warning his "dear Sally" against her wiles and machinations, her envies and jealousies. He gives no reasons. Probably his "benefit night" was one of the two for which she did not act.

The following sonorous lines were written by an enthusiastic admirer upon seeing her appear during this period in the characters of *Andromache*, *Hermione* and *Lady Townly*, and were printed in the Gentleman's Magazine:

> Fired with thy praise I strike the trembling strings,
> Bold is the flight for my unpracticed wings.

Cou'd I preserve thy beauties in my lays
And copy the perfections which I praise.
How wou'd each reader's varying visage glow
With ruddy mirth—now fade with livid woe!
When fair *Andromache* laments the fate
Of her loved lord & Asia's ruined state,
Or paints her terrors while the flame devours,
Troy's shattered bulwarks, & her trembling towers—
Big with uncommon woes the scene appears,
And the whole ruin thunders in our ears;
But when she trembles for her helpless son,
Her fears affect us and become our own.
Behold! she lays the tender airs aside,
Quits ease for state, humility for pride;
The mien majestic Jove's high Queen bestows,
And Phœbus tunes each period as it flows—
T'is then *Hermione* our wonder draws,
And arms our vengeance in her beauty's cause:
Superior to her wrongs, her soul disdains
Meanly to sue—but like a Queen complains;
But now farewell the buskin & the train
See *Townly* brighten in the comic scene,
There elegance, propriety & ease,
Taste, judgment, spirit, all conspire to please.
Bright beauty's power th' unhappy gazers prove,
And admiration kindles into love.
Attend, ye criticks, every action scan,
Weigh all her words—then censure if ye can!

Soon after the re-opening of Smock Alley Theatre, Dorset resigned the Lord-Lieutenantcy; but before his departure for England he and the Duchess attended the theatre in state, on which occasion Woffington delivered a laudatory epilogue written for the occasion, of which a single couplet will be enough:

Deck'd he goes, with honour's fair applause
Crown'd with laurels reap'd in virtue's cause.

That Woffington set the fashions in dress during her stay in Dublin, as she had done in London, is shown time and again by those who have written of her, and in the Dublin Gazette of 1753 was printed the following:

PERIOD XIII.

"VERSES WROTE EXTEMPORE

last Saturday on seeing

A LADY WHO US'D TO RAIL AT MRS. WOFFINGTON

dres't in imitation of her—

Folly at *Reason* takes offence
Yet apes the garb of common sense
The Name of Thought her peace disturbs,
Her choice prefers the dress of Words.

Tho Mrs. ——, With true theatric spirit
Abuses Peg's Superior Merit,
Neglects the Mind that marks her fame—
But trims her Gown, exact the same."

Woffington left Dublin at the end of May, 1754, little dreaming that she was never again to see her native land.

Victor, in partnership with Lowdon (the former treasurer under Sheridan), became part lessee of Smock Alley the following season, and the Duke of Dorset, wondering why the proprietors had not secured Woffington for their start in management, received from Victor this explanation in a letter:

"When I waited on Mrs. Woffington to take my leave at her setting out for London, I told her I thought it for her interest as well as ours that she should be engaged the next winter there. She was greatly disappointed at not receiving proposals from me, upon which I told her she would find Lowdon in London, and if it was her desire to return, whatever terms they agreed on should have my hearty concurrence. They met in consequence, but as she expected her former salary of £800, he very wisely got rid of the subject as fast as he could. No man has a higher sense of her merit than I have, yet that great salary cannot be given, even to her, the fourth season, because novelty is the very spirit and life of all public entertainments."

But what was Dublin's loss became London's gain—and Peg Woffington returned to the scene of her first great triumphs only to attain still greater ones.

FROM A PAINTING IN THE KENSINGTON GALLERY.

PERIOD XIV.

FROM BELLAMY TO WILKINSON.

ONCE again Margaret Woffington comes to London without an engagement; but this time she had not to knock eighteen times at John Rich's stage-door and beg for a hearing. The tables are turned, and Rich seeks her.

She was living then in York Buildings, but retained her villa at Teddington. Spranger Barry had gone off to Ireland, predicting ruin to Rich by his desertion. But never were truer words than those of Wilkinson, in his comment upon this all too common "actor's threat": "Such threats," says the comprehensive Tate, who had been both actor and manager, "are weak in the extreme. It must be a manager's own fault if he is ruined by the loss of any performer whatever."

Although George Anne Bellamy was still retained at Covent Garden this season, Rich immediately engaged Mrs. Woffington at her Dublin salary, and she made her re-appearance in London on the 21st of October, 1754, as *Marcia* in the "Nonjuror," with Theophilus Cibber as *De Wolf*.

A great house gathered upon the announcement of Mrs. Woffington's name for this occasion; and the outburst of applause that welcomed her return proved the actress to be now at the very zenith of her popularity.

This performance was followed by her appearance as *Sigismunda*, and on the 28th of October by "The Provoked Husband," with *Lady Townly* acted by Woffington, and with Thomas Sheridan, who had also been engaged by Rich, in

the character of *Lord Townly*. The "Merchant of Venice" was then produced, *Shylock* and *Portia* by Sheridan and Woffington, and then Woffington played *Wildair* for a week, after which "The Provoked Husband" was revived again by command of the new King, George III, who desired to witness Peg Woffington anew as *Lady Townly*. She next appeared as *Lady Macbeth* and *Phædre*, and after that, in rapid succession, in a round of the parts in which she had acquired her early fame, such as *Lady Betty*, *Mrs. Frail*, *Zara*, *Phyllis* and *Millamant*.

This was the year also of her first performance of *Jocasta*, in which Mrs. Bellamy acted *Eurydice* with her and was so overcome with terror inspired by Woffington's acting, that she was carried off the stage in a state of insensibility.

The season closed with no eventful occurrence, and during the final nights Mrs. Woffington appeared as *Mrs. Ford*, *Jane Shore*, *Wildair* and *Lady Macbeth*—a variety of parts certainly, and not equalled, I believe, by any actress of her century. Her restoration to favor with the public, her power to draw a crowded house at all times, and the popular applause she received in each part, testifies to her merit in all of them.

Garrick and Woodward, Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Pritchard and Kitty Clive were at Drury Lane this season, but Margaret Woffington certainly held her own against all rivals.

Drury Lane, too, was now the scene of a series of mob-riots not unlike those which Woffington and Sheridan had left behind them in Dublin. Garrick had brought some French dancers from Paris, and introduced them in a Chinese spectacle. National prejudice ran high just at this time, and the unfortunate foreigners were driven off the stage, the theatre was very much damaged by the mob, and Garrick's own house barely escaped destruction.

During the second year of her return to Covent Garden Mrs. Woffington played *Donna Hypolita* in "She Would and She Wouldn't" for the first time in London, and also exchanged *Ophelia* in "Hamlet" for *The Queen*, which she played with Spranger Barry, who, having recovered his equilibrium, had returned to Rich at his former salary. After the latter performance "The

Recruiting Officer" had a hearing. Later in the season the tragedy of "The Rival Queens," with Woffington and Bellamy in their former parts, and with Barry as *Alexander*, was revived with a wealth of scenery, and drew crowded houses for some weeks. Mrs. Bellamy must have become much subdued, for we have no accounts of a repetition of such unpleasantness between her and Mrs. Woffington as had occurred when they previously played the Rival Queens.* Early in the new year, 1756, Peggy played *Donna Violante* in "The Wonder" for the first time. This, too, was the year of the rival "King Lears," when Garrick and Barry divided the town into factions:

A King—nay, *every inch a King!*
Such Barry doth appear.
But Garrick's quite a different thing:
He's every inch *King Lear!*

Foote was at Covent Garden this season, and so was Miss Nossiter (who afterward died of a broken heart when Barry deserted her and married Mrs. Dancer), but Foote never acted in any play with Mrs. Woffington; and Miss Nossiter was in the cast with her only on the nights that Peggy played her perennial part of *Sylvia*, when Barry acted *Plume* and Miss Nossiter *Rose*.

The remainder of the season passed quietly. Peg Woffington's imperious nature had softened considerably during the three pleasant years of her stay among her hospitable countrymen, while it is very likely that many sorrows through her love affairs, and much disappointment had tended to subdue the obstreperous Bellamy, who though not less vain, had learned to make her conceit less obtrusive. There are no records of any quarrels between the rival ladies during this year.

The seasons of 1754, 1755 and 1756 seem to have been rather dull and uneventful, though thoroughly successful in all respects. Garrick and Rich made no especial effort, except in the "Lear" period, to rival each other in the attractions of their opposing houses.

---

* *This play seems to have had a bad effect very frequently upon the tempers of the ladies who acted* Roxana *and* Statira. *The great Mrs. Barry and Mrs. Boutell, some seventy or eighty years before, had a contest over a veil used in it, and Mrs. Barry employed her stage dagger with such effect on her rival as to give her something more than a stage stab.*

PERIOD XIV.

Drury Lane and Covent Garden had sunk into a lethargy due to comfortable patronage, and were so well satisfied with the audiences which they drew, that no attempt was made to increase them. Tate Wilkinson † states that in the revival of "Phædra" at the Covent Garden "the performers and audiences seemed half asleep, and the candles burned dim, unless at the following passage, which, with the advantage of Mrs. Woffington's figure and new dress, prepared them for the chase:

> 'Come! let us hunt the stag and chase the foaming boar.
> Come! rouse up all the horrid monsters of the wood—
> For there, even there Hypolitus will guard me.'"

"After which passage," he continues, "all parties on and off the stage, as if by mutual consent, unanimously returned to their evening's nap."

Tate Wilkinson seems always to make the effort to write impartially, but here and there leaks out his resentment of Woffington's antagonistic treatment of him.

And this brings us to Peg's last quarrel on the stage.

Wilkinson's aptitude at mimicry appears to have been at the bottom of the trouble. Woffington's peculiar voice was easy prey to such apery, and the very first effort of Wilkinson's boyish study had been to "take off" this great favorite of the stage. Laugh as we will at the weakness of others in taking offence at being publicly burlesqued, let this shaft of ridicule be turned upon ourselves and see how quickly we should resent it. It is a man's or woman's personality, either of voice or walk or gesture, which these ready mimics take advantage of to burlesque, and when we remember that this very personality is perhaps an ineradicable natural trait, that it is interwoven with the genius and power that have won popularity and are to secure fame and fortune—when we also reflect that ridicule is a serious weapon to play with, and often kills when it only purposed to amuse—we need not wonder at the actor, and especially the tragic actor, feeling some resentment towards those clever clowns who may destroy, or at least weaken, by their imitations, the respect of the public for the object of their buffoonery.

---

* *Wilkinson's Memoirs, Vol. IV.*

In his memoir of his own life Wilkinson confesses that his earliest and greatest success (when only thirteen years old), before Dr. Thackery, the good governor of Harrow, was a take-off of Peg Woffington in *Lady Townly*. In his efforts to become an actor he was much aided by Mr. Brooks (the curate in his father's parish) and his wife, Mrs. Brooks, a notable authoress of the day, who listed among her visitors Quin, Mrs. Cholmondely (Woffington's sister) and Woffington herself.

The boy's clever imitations had at this time become talked about, and Mrs. Cholmondely and her sister were so incensed by the liberty he had taken with the performance of *Lady Townly* that by no effort of Mrs. Brooks could they be induced to patronize or encourage Tate. Mr. and Mrs. Brooks frequently took young Wilkinson to call on Mrs. Woffington at her residence in the York Buildings, off the Strand, where she was now residing, but he was invariably treated with coldness and contempt. Woffington felt as much justifiable repugnance at Tate Wilkinson's imitation of her, as Mr. Irving might reasonably feel at Dixey's caricature.

Such a resentment seems natural. The more an audience is impressed by the personality of a fine actor, the more likely they are to be tricked into a laugh at the burl sque of it.

Tate Wilkinson's impersonation of Mrs. Woffington was, no doubt, free from exaggeration and true to every trick, every manner and every inflection of the actress. But it was nevertheless an imitation, and being so it could not fail to create considerable amusement wherever he presented it. It was exceedingly audacious ("cheeky" and "fresh" are popular current terms which might be used) in Tate Wilkinson to seek the patronage of the woman after he had attempted to make the actress ridiculous, and it was not a little sign that years had softened the imperious Woffington's temper when she suffered his presence at all.

In 1756, at the age of seventeen, encouraged by the plaudits of his audiences and the good opinions of his friends, Tate Wilkinson made an effort to go on the stage. He waited on Mr. Rich, and rehearsed several speeches from *Richard III*, but after the trial Rich told him plainly that he never could

become an actor, but allowed him the consolation of going behind the scenes during the performances at Covent Garden and of mingling with the players in the green-room. Being a boy, and a rather forward one at that, Tate managed to make friends with the comedian Shuter (quite rising in popularity at that time) who sympathized with and encouraged him in the hope that Mr. Rich would eventually give him a position in Covent Garden.

An affair in which Tate was an unfortunate participant soon after this, however, destroyed all his dreams of an engagement at that time, and fixed on him the severe and lasting displeasure of the manager.

In his Memoirs, Wilkinson relates the event in the following terms: "The total overthrow of all my hopes was occasioned by Mrs. Woffington. The cause was as follows: One day my old friend Captain Forbes had invited me to dine with him at the Bradford Arms. After dinner the Captain said: 'Tate, we will go to the play.' Being jolly with the bottle I assented, and when we arrived at the Covent Garden Theatre I could not prevail on him to sit anywhere but in the stage-box. He was in full guard-regimentals, myself by no means fit to appear as his companion; but he persisted and led the way; and in the front chairs of His Majesty's box we were seated, and no more strange than true, the lower sides exhibited a beggarly account of empty seats, and only a few persons scattered in the front ones—not an extraordinary circumstance to relate then of an unfashionable night at Covent Garden. The play was "The Confederacy." Being in such a conspicuous position the eyes of the performers were instantaneously directed on beholding a poor young lad, a mere dependent (skulking nightly behind the curtain) placed in a stage-box. They naturally concluded I had gained admittance by an order, and taken such a place by way of impudent bravado, the which deserved chastisement. They sent and spoke to Rich, and it was agreed that Wilkinson should be instantly ordered from his improper situation. A messenger was sent to put the mandate from Mr. Rich in full force. The box-keeper came to me, and Captain Forbes, warm with his wine and the insult offered to his friend, soon convinced the official messenger of his mistake. But, unfortunately, Mrs. Woffington, who acted *Clarissa*, having been frequently

told that I was remarkable for taking her off (as the phrase was and is), came close to the stage-box, finishing her speech with such a sarcastic sneer at me as actually made me draw back. My unfortunate star sure was then predominant, for at that moment a woman of the town in the balcony above where I was seated repeated some words in a remarkably shrill tone, which occasioned a general laugh;* like electricity it caught Mrs. Woffington's ears, whose voice was far from being enchanting; on perceiving the pipe-squeak on her right hand, and being conscious of the insult she had then given apparently to me, it struck her comprehension so forcibly that she immediately concluded I had given the retort upon her in that open and audacious manner, to render her acting and tone ridiculous to the audience, as returning contempt for her devilish sneer. She again turned and darted her lovely eyes as tho' assisted by the Furies, which made me look confounded and sheepish; all which only served to confirm my condemnation.

"When the scene was finished and she had reached the green-room, she related my insolence in such terms as rendered me a subject of abuse, contempt and hatred with all the company; but of that circumstance I was quite ignorant; at that instant I had, it is true, observed to my mortification Mrs. Woffington's angry look—but could not divine the real cause.

"The noon following when I attended Mr. Rich's levee I was kept waiting a considerable time, but as that was and is the too common fate of distressed dependents, patience was my friend.

"At last Mrs. Woffington passed through the room where I was thus humiliated, and without a word, curtsy or bow of the head, proceeded to her sedan, from which, however, she immediately and haughtily returned, and advancing toward me with queen-like steps, and viewing me most contemptuously, said:

"'Mr. Wilkinson, I have made a visit this morning to Mr. Rich to insist on his not giving you any engagement whatever—no, not one of the most

---

* *On Woffington's side and by those of her friends who were in a position to give the evidence of their eyes and ears—it was contended that Wilkinson himself, in his semi-intoxicated state, uttered the cry.*

menial kind in the theatre. Merit you have none, charity you deserve not, for if you did *my purse should give you a dinner.* Your impudence to me last night, where you had with such assurance placed yourself, is one proof of your ignorance, added to that, I heard you echo my voice when I was acting; and I sincerely hope, in whatever barn you are suffered as an unworthy stroller, you will fully experience the same contempt you dared to offer me.'

"With a flounce and enraged features, without waiting or permitting me to reply, she darted once more into her chair.

"I really was so astonished, frightened and bewildered that I knew not how to act or think, but was relieved from longer suspense and tedious waiting by a message from Rich, intimating that he could not see me at his levee either that day or in future, or listen to any proposition for engagement whatever; for my behavior was too gross and rude to be justified, and I must immediately depart; but the person added that I might continue the liberty of the scenes during the season, but should not on any account take the freedom to speak to Mr. Rich."

This unfortunate affair cast a blight over Tate Wilkinson's hopes at Covent Garden. Having thus *innocently*—(as he puts it—but of course there are two sides to every story)—incurred Mrs. Woffington's resentment, he was forced to wait for time to soften her anger and dislike. The permission that Mr. Rich had granted him to come behind the scenes, he liberally availed himself of, hoping that accident would restore him to favor.

Woffington was on the friendliest terms at this time with nearly all of the members of the company, and her cause was naturally espoused against an outside person who had such a disagreeable trick of making sport of those actors whom the world was accustomed to esteem.

Garrick having witnessed the imitations of young Wilkinson, offered him an engagement to support Foote in a preliminary farce in which his special gift of mimicry might be available. When Woffington heard of Garrick's intention to present an entertainment at Drury Lane in which her acting was to be made sport of, she became, very naturally, much incensed.

If the idea had ever been entertained by Garrick, it was certainly in

the very worst taste, sensitive as he himself had ever been to ridicule, to thus connive at the burlesque of the woman whom he had formerly loved and once wished to marry. As soon as Woffington heard of the proposition she consulted with Colonel Cæsar, an officer of the Guards, who had for some time been one of her most devoted admirers.

Colonel Cæsar waited upon Garrick formally and entered a firm protest against any travesty of Mrs. Woffington which should bring ridicule on her as an actress. He affirmed that as Mrs. Woffington *was soon to be his wife* any affront shown to her would promptly be resented by him, and that if Mr. Garrick permitted Wilkinson to perform any imitation of the lady in Drury Lane, the manager must answer to him as a gentleman and a soldier.

It is stated that not only did Garrick hasten to acquiesce in this peremptory command, but expressed his hearty disapproval of any form of entertainment which could injure the fame of so beautiful and clever an actress.

Foote and Wilkinson were summoned and directed not to introduce into their farce any line, speech or business that would give the least offence to Mrs. Woffington. "This I subscribed to as Mr. Garrick demanded," says Wilkinson in his Memoirs, "and Mr. Foote became my bail. * * * For had I been in Mrs. Woffington's place, I think I might and should too, probably, have acted the same as she did."

It has been said that Peg Woffington died a spinster. The memorial tablet in the little church at Teddington perpetuates this supposition, in cold marble.

But if we may put any trust in a writer in the European Magazine (February, 1795), and the later "Mackliniana" in the same periodical (May, 1800), both being endorsed in a statement that I find in certain manuscript pages in possession of Mr. McKee, of New York, which are attributed to Macklin (and which certainly seem to be in his handwriting), Margaret Woffington was married, shortly after the Wilkinson affair, to this same Colonel Cæsar. But her subsequent actions and entirely free use of her own funds (something not at that time permitted to a married woman) goes far to disprove this assertion.

Walpole says that Colonel Cæsar was a lineal descendant of Sir Julius Cæsar, Chancellor of the Exchequer in the reign of James I, adding, as he noted the above Garrick incident, "I shall wind up this letter with an admirable *bon-mot.* Somebody asked me at the play the other night what was become of Mrs. Woffington. I replied she was taken off by Colonel Cæsar. Lord Tyrawley said: 'I suppose she was reduced to *Aut Cæsar aut Nullus.*'" *

---

* *This letter of Walpole's is dated November, 1756. Woffington had not left the stage then. It was her last season on the stage, but she acted repeatedly up to April, 1757.*

THE LAST PORTRAIT OF PEG WOFFINGTON.

PERIOD XV.

FROM LIFE TO DEATH.

MARGARET WOFFINGTON began the season of 1756–7 as *Mrs. Ford* in Shakspere's "Merry Wives," little dreaming of its tragic ending for her, and that merciless fate would never permit her to finish it.

Although only in her thirty-eighth year, the wear and tear of life had begun to tell upon Peg Woffington—and yet we find her this season adding three new parts to her repertory: *Celia* in "The Humorous Lieutenant" of Beaumont and Fletcher, *The Queen* in "Richard III" (when Barry made his first attempt at the crook-back tyrant), and finally creating the character of *Lady Randolph* in the Rev. John Home's tragedy of "Douglas," when, on the 14th of March (1757), that doleful and artificial piece was acted for the first time on the London stage. Her intellect must have been vigorous to the last. She also acted on the 24th of the month *Lothario* for the first time in England.

But throughout this season close observers noted, in spite of her undaunted spirit, a flickering of the old time fire.

The early age at which she had begun her life in the theatre (it might, in fact, be said that she toddled upon it from the very cradle), the assiduity of her attention to duty, and the effort she had made for many years to preserve her station in an exacting social circle, and at the same time to maintain her position on the stage, had exhausted her strength.

Her face commenced to lose its infinite charm, her acting seemed to

lack something of its former magnetic force, and her physical power grew weaker. She, however, still attended to her duties at the theatre with unremitting care, and was generous enough to offer the strength, which ought to have been husbanded, at every benefit given for the assistance of the poorer actors. It is an excellent testimony to the charity of her nature, if not to its prudence, that her very last appearance before the public was in the kindly aid of her professional brethren.

On Monday, May 3d, 1757, as *Rosalind* in "As You Like It," at the Covent Garden Theatre, for the benefit of Mr. Anderson, Mr. Wigall and Madame Gondeau, Peg Woffington made her last appearance on the stage.

Tate Wilkinson had evidently made his peace with her; or, at least, she had forgiven him so far as to withdraw her opposition to his engagement at Covent Garden, for he was this season a member of the regular company: a final and most lovely token of her forgiving nature;—and it is from his pen that we have the most graphic account of her thrilling and tragic farewell performance.

Wilkinson was standing near the wings as Mrs. Woffington, dressed in the character of *Rosalind*, and Mrs. Vincent in that of *Celia*, were going on the stage in the first act. Mrs. Woffington stopped for a moment to exchange a word with Wilkinson, saying that she was glad to hear of his success, and that there was no doubt of his gaining a good engagement next season. Tate felt too much honored by her notice of him to reply in becoming terms. He simply bowed his acknowledgments, and stood watching the great actress as her unapproachable performance of *Rosalind* that night warmed the audience into its old-time enthusiasm.

Through four acts of the play Peg Woffington performed with her usual spirit and liveliness. But before going on in the fifth she complained to Wilkinson of a feeling of faintness.

He offered her the assistance of his arm, which she accepted. Coming off the stage, she again said that she was too ill to play, and was fatigued by the quick change in dress which *Rosalind* has to make before her final entrance.

She summoned up heroic courage, however, and went on again. The play was over, and she had progressed so far as to go down towards the foot-lights to speak its charming epilogue:

"If it be true that good wine needs no bush, it is as true that a good play needs no epilogue"—

But Woffington did not finish her task. As her quivering lips uttered their last sentence:

"If I were among you, I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased me"—

Her nervous force gave out: her voice faltered, she trembled and staggered back from the foot-lights; for a thrilling instant she rallied again, and then endeavored to continue the lines; but, poor girl! her light had gone out forever.

With a wail of agony she cried out: "Oh God! Oh God!" and tottered helplessly to the wings, where she fell into her attendant's arms.

The vast audience was awe-stricken. For a full minute there was an impressive silence over the house. Then a storm of applause broke out, to call back again the queen of the stage to her accustomed place.

But that call was never answered.

The public had beheld for the last time its lovely favorite! Peg Woffington had uttered the very last word she was ever to speak to her devoted admirers, and the last act of the drama of a life, which had been devoted unselfishly to the harmless entertainment of her kind and the honor of the stage: that life which had known shadow and sunshine—both in plenty: struggles and successes, in plenty too: that life so full of alternate disappointments and triumph:—of sweet and bitter mingled, from her first hour before the mimic scene until her last—ended, to all intents and purposes, then and there.

The curtain fell on the last scene of Woffington's artistic career that night.

Loving hands bore her home, and for several days her life was despaired

of. But she rallied slightly at the end of a week. The news of this partial restoration to health spread with an electric thrill, and was welcomed by every lover of the drama. It occasioned the following lines:

TO MRS. WOFFINGTON,

ON HEARING THAT SHE GREW BETTER.

Will then the tyrant loose his fang
And drop the cold arrest,
Shall health subdue the vital pang,
Shall Rapture warm thy breast?

Shall Wit once more his seat ascend
And in thy converse reign,
Shall Humour on his throne attend,
Shall Fancy fill his train?

Shall Sense once more, shall Worth be seen
To charm the gay and wise;
Shall Charity exalt that mien
And brighten up those eyes?

Let prudes, let hypocrites be dumb
And drop the saintly mask,
Let Want to thee and Anguish come
Receive the boon, not ask.

How copious did thy bounty flow
When on the bed of death,
To cheer the wailing Widow's woe,
To aid the Orphan's breath.

Let Minden's* sad remains declare—
O give it breath to fame!
Who snatched the wretched from despair?—
Engrave, O Time! thy name!

The grateful stage now trims anew
Thy blooming wreath with pain,
Thy tempting laurels lifts to view,
But lifts, she fears, in vain.

The change in Peg Woffington's condition, however, was but a temporary

* *The subscription in favor of the widows and orphans of those who fell in the Battle of Minden was originated and materially assisted by Margaret Woffington.*

one. The seeds of an internal complaint were in her constitution. She inherited from her father a disrelish for doctors and physic, and had disregarded symptoms which should have been immediately and medically treated.*

For nearly three years after her last appearance at Covent Garden Margaret Woffington existed as a mere shadow, and lingered in retirement at Teddington with a good friend whom she seems to have found in one Mrs. Barrington, the wife of that Barrington who had played *Macheath* to her *Polly*, when as children they acted together in Dublin. But she steadily resisted all temptations to resume her former position on the stage.

"I will never," she is reported to have said on one occasion, previous to her illness, "destroy my own reputation by clinging to the shadow after the substance is gone. When I can no longer bound on the boards with at least some show of my youthful vigor, and when the enthusiasm of the public begins to show signs of decay, that will be the last appearance of Margaret Woffington."

She kept her word.

During the quietude of this period in her life, Woffington, we are told, was brought into serious reflection upon a future existence by a casual visit to the chapel where John Wesley preached.

It may be that the words of this eloquent divine exerted a beneficial influence over her mind. But there is another, and more natural reason for her conversion to religious thought. Her sister's husband had only recently changed his sword for the shepherd's crook, and left the army to become curate in the Established Church. Mary Woffington's bent of mind was possibly religious—and if she was instrumental in converting her husband, why is it not reasonable to suppose that she was the ministering angel who guided her sister to higher paths? There can be no question of the innate goodness of Margaret Woffington's heart, and her conversion to the practice of religion was easy. God's hand was to be seen in more than one of the generous acts of her life.

However, it is a fact that after the stroke of paralysis she became more

* "*Mackliniana*"—*European Magazine, May, 1800.*

zealous in charity to the poor of her neighborhood. We are told that she built a row of alms-houses for the indigent, which are still to be seen at Teddington, with the tablet identifying them as the Woffington cottages. She knitted stockings, which, along with baskets of provisions, she personally carried through the lanes of Teddington to the cottages of her poor pensioners.

During these three declining years Peg Woffington never once entered the scene of her former triumphs, nor mingled in any way with her former theatrical associates. Many called her new fervor hypocrisy. It is not a novel cry against those who have had the light to see, and the courage to avoid their former errors. Happily Providence—not man—judges motives. I do not think

that Woffington became a bigot; but the emptiness of the friendships which had been professed for her doubtless became apparent as she lay wasting away, balancing for so long a time between life and death. The frailty and hollowness of the bubble of pleasure dawned upon her.

Once, when a young lady came to Teddington to entreat her assistance toward gaining an engagement in Covent Garden Theatre, Peg Woffington advised her in the strongest terms to abandon the idea of going upon the stage. "There is no position in life," she said, "so full of incessant temptations." A much more forcible truth against the theatre of Woffington's time than of our own.

During the last years of her life Margaret Woffington made a will by which she bequeathed an annuity of forty pounds a year to her mother for life, and the remainder of her property, amounting, it is stated, to over five thousand pounds, to Mrs. Cholmondely. These were her own hard earned savings, for it seems that her annuity from McSwiney was to cease at her death.

Woffington's fortune must have been very much greater. From the statement of account furnished by her broker of the disposition made of funds entrusted to him, while she still lay an invalid after her farewell performance, and to which she has appended her signature in attestation of its correctness (a fac-simile of which I am able to furnish through the kindness of Mr. McKee, to whom the original belongs), it will be seen exactly what money she was once possessed of; and it is but natural to suppose her the owner of a considerable amount of personal and household property, which she had accumulated during her long and successful professional career.*

The following is that statement of her bankers to which I have just referred:

---

* *Her friend, Mrs. Barrington, had expected to become possessed of her stage-jewels, but as there was no clause to that effect in the will, Mrs. Cholmondely insisted upon retaining them. Mrs. Barrington, in order to hold them, insinuated that they were worthless, and only fit for stage effects. But this can hardly have been the case, for it was the custom of Woffington's aristocratic worshippers to tender their homage in the substantial form of real diamonds.*

343

1757

M^RS MARG^T WOFFINGTON D^R

Apr: 29	paid for 3000 3 ℔C^t Annuities	2	673	2	6
May 4	paid for 1000 Subscription M^r Perry		173	15	
June 3	paid 2^d paym^t, 10 ℔C^t, on D°		100		
July 1	paid		50		
7	paid 3^d paym^t, 15 ℔C^t, on 1000 Subscription		150		
Aug: 2	paid on 3½ ℔C^t Loan at the Exchequer	1	200		
17	paid 4^th paym^t, 15 ℔C^t, on 1000 Subscription		150		
Sep: 20	paid 5^th paym^t 15 ℔C^t on D°		150		
Oct: 19	paid	4	021	4	9
Nov: 7	paid for 200 India Army		177	10	
Dec: 13	paid to Balance		22	10	
	I allow of this Amount, having recd the Balance & Exchanged the Voucher this 13 Dec^r 1757.	8	868	2	3
	MARG^T WOFFINGTON				

This is evidently an account rendered by the bankers of Mrs. Woffington, who acted as her financial agents, of their disposition of deposits of moneys made by her with them, aggregating the large sum of £8,868 2s. 3d., equal in these days to far more than $42,921.68, its equivalent in our currency. Indeed, I should say that Woffington's fortune, at the moment when paralysis bereft the stage of her talents, amounted in round numbers to at least a hundred thousand dollars, reckoned by the value of money in our day. It appears from the above account that her bankers invested for her in stock all but the sum of £4,043 14s. 9d., which she drew in cash, thus taking out in one day (October 19th) the large sum of $19,462.82, evidently in a single payment. To whom was this given? Possibly it was the purchase-money for the Teddington Alms-house property.

There was a good deal of adverse comment on the disposition which Peg Woffington made by will of her remaining property.

343 × Mrs. Marg.t Woffington Dr.

1757

Apr: 29	paid for 3000 3 p.C.t Annuities	2	673	2	6
May 4	paid for 1000 Subscription — Mr Perry		173	15	
June 3	paid 2.d paym.t 10 p.C.t on Do		100		
July 1	paid		50		
7	paid 3.d paym.t 15 p.C.t on 1000 Subscription		150		
Aug: 2	paid on 3½ p.C.t Loan at the Exchequer	1	200		
17	paid 4.th paym.t 15 p.C.t on 1000 Subscription		150		
Sep: 20	paid 5.th paym.t 15 p.C.t on Do		150		
Oct: 19	paid	4	021	4	9
Nov: 7	paid for 200 India Anny		177	10	
Dec. 13	paid to Balance		22	10	
	Pallow of this Acomt, having rec.d the Balance	8	868	2	3

& Exchanged the Vouchers this 13 Dec.r 1757.

Mary.t Woffington

THE LITTLE CHURCH IN TEDDINGTON.

Colonel Cæsar had given it out to the public before her demise that he was to be her sole legatee. If they had been married in reality, of course her property would belong to him. That he did not secure it thus, ought to be proof enough that Mrs. Woffington never became Mrs. Cæsar.

"Woffington's will," wrote Macklin, "though, it is said, greatly disappointed the Colonel (who, perhaps, might have disappointed her, had it been his turn to go first), was more suitable to the duties she owed to so near and valued a relative. Some generalship was practiced on this occasion between Mrs. Woffington and the Colonel. The former having neglected to make a clause in favor of her sister until her last illness, the Colonel suspected her intentions, and with a view to prevent them, was constant in his daily visits, prolonging them almost from morning until night. The sister took advantage, however, of the Colonel's leaving the house one evening rather early, and had the will altered to her own mind, and the codicil was completed just in time, as the Colonel returned before he went to bed, to bid another adieu to his lovely Peggy."

At length the end came.

Woffington had come up to London from Teddington, and was stopping temporarily in Queen's Square, Westminster, when the gaunt Conqueror of all made his call upon her. In this place, on the 28th of March, 1760, in the morning, she fell asleep.

Before she died she must have expressed a wish to make her long rest in Teddington: for thither upon an early April morning she was carried, and in the month of smiles and tears such as her life had been, she was buried in the old church-yard—but in what spot no one can tell. The tablet erected in the chancel of the little church, beside the great organ, notes that "*near* this spot lies," etc.

When the church and the church-yard were put in order many years ago, no trace of her remains was found: like the dust of Cæsar, all that was mortal of Peg Woffington may have been ground into powder between old Time's millstone years, and, wafted on the winds of another March, been blown across the road upon the window-panes of the little row of the Woffington

alms-houses which face the old church, and which yet attest the love and charity of the donor.

The tablet placed by loving hands in the church still further recites, as may be seen, that:

In the same grave
Lies the body of Martin Horace Cholmondely
Son of the Hon'ble Robert Cholmondely and
Mary Cholmondely sister of the said Margaret
Woffington, aged 8 months.

What a mystery lies in these lines! Why does this little infant rest with Margaret Woffington in her eternal sleep? Who can read the secret of the love, or who may touch the chord of sympathy which must have vibrated between these two in life—and which became stilled in both hearts, perhaps, at one and the same moment, in a simultaneous death.

The passing away of this brilliant and beautiful woman was the severest of misfortunes to the stage, and a loss of no common magnitude to the social world.

In the latter she had shone with a lustre only equaled by the brilliancy which she lent to the theatre.

In her childhood she had run barefooted through the streets and along the quays of Dublin a bricklayer's orphan and a peddler of fruit and vegetables.*

In her womanhood she was courted by the representatives of the highest circles of London as the first actress of the age, and as a brilliant hostess among the most noted of her time. By people of rank she was esteemed for the sparkle of her wit, the refinement of her tastes and the variety of her accomplishments.

When she first came to London to play in its foremost theatre she had but a single robe for tragedy parts: and but one suit of apparel for her afterwards famous character of *Sir Harry Wildair.*† Yet she lived to set the fashion in gowns for the women of England, and evinced such exquisite taste in matters of attire that, at one time, little that was novel was worn by ladies of quality unless Woffington had introduced it.

She ruled women in their domain, and everybody in her own.

But I love better to dwell upon the goodness of her heart, her sense of honor, and her devotion to duty.

By the poor she was held in affection for her benevolence and charity

---

* *Nell Gwynne was much older when (as tradition tells us) she peddled oranges around and about Drury Lane, and when she was lifted from the sidewalk there, to be one of His Majesty's Servants.*

† *Wilkinson's Memoirs.*

toward all who needed help. In the number and excellence of her amiable qualities her frailties were forgotten.

While she was regarded by the whole world as an honor to the stage, to the country of her birth, and to the city where she dwelt, she was mourned by the dramatic profession and by all who knew her personally as one of the kindest friends the poor and helpless ever had.

And what a martyr to duty!

When she was stricken to the heart with mortal disease in the very speaking of her part, she struggled with the King of Terrors himself to finish her lines and do her whole duty to the end.

And what a soft and tender spirit must have been hers! who that she offended but must have been touched by her readiness to make amends! It is a comfort to think of her on that fatal evening, resting on the supporting arm of young Wilkinson and saying in her own sweet way, with her lovely eyes full of kindness, those gracious words to him, although he had wounded her so deeply but a little time before!

And her reward was, to be spared that night sudden and unprovided death, and to live to do a public-spirited act of enduring charity, and to make a peaceful end sustained by the consolations of religious faith.

Farewell, then, most beautiful, most gifted, most flattered, most kind, most sacrificing! A little weak—but sorely punished for it! A woman like many for whom Mother Eve is responsible—but such an one as man is apt to care most for and to drop bitterest tears for, when all is over and death makes her goodness seem great and her failings small.

A whole drama ends with her.

The same year in which she was stricken with her mortal illness, her old admirer, Colley Cibber, passed away amid the luxuries and vanities of life, in Berkeley Square—and a little month after Woffington's death, this same vain old man's despised and forgotten daughter, Charlotte Charke, whom Woffington had often befriended when her own father would not,—breathed her last in a miserable lodging in Clerkenwell.

That the subject of these few chapters, by her death excited feelings

of profound concern is witnessed by the tributes that followed her. And I cannot more fitly close this offering which I have made to her memory than by quoting the final and predictive lines of the Monody that John Hoole wrote "In Memory of Margaret Woffington":—

Farewell, the glory of a wond'ring age!
The second Oldfield of a sinking stage!
Farewell the boast and envy of thy kind
A female softness and a manly mind!
Long as the Muses can record thy praise
Thy fame shall last till far succeeding days:
While Wit survives thy name shall ever bloom
And wreaths unfading flourish round thy tomb!
While thus I tune the plaintive notes in vain
For her whose worth demands a nobler strain,
Lo! to my heart some warning Genius cries—
Attempt not swain, beyond thy flight to rise
Shall thy weak skill attempt to raise our woes
Or paint a loss that every bosom knows!
'Tis not thy lays can teach us tears to shed
What eye refrains—for WOFFINGTON is dead!

ADDENDA.

IN FOUR PARTS.

I.—WOFFINGTON'S CHARACTERS.

II.—WOFFINGTON'S GHOST.

III.—A MONODY.

IV.—INDEX.

I.

List of Parts acted by Peg Woffington.

IN CHILDHOOD.

Polly,	in	The Beggars' Opera
Macheath,	in	" " "
Mrs. Peachum,	in	" " "
Nell,	in	The Devil to Pay
Mother Midnight,	in	Twin Rivals
Phillida,	in	Damon and Phillida
Miss Lucy,	in	Virgin Unmasked
Belvidera,	in	Humors of the Army
Flora,	in	Ye Village Opera

IN LATER LIFE.

Ophelia,	in	Hamlet
Queen,	in	"
Cordelia,	in	King Lear
Constance,	in	King John
Veturia,	(Thompson's version)	Coriolanus
Lady Percy,	in	Henry IV
Desdemona,	in	Othello
Queen,	in	Richard III
Lady Anne,	in	" "
Queen Katharine,	in	Henry VIII
Portia,	in	Julius Cæsar

Isabella,	in	Measure for Measure
Kate,	in	Henry IV
Hippolito,	(Dryden's version)	The Tempest
Helena,	in	All's Well that Ends Well
Lady Macbeth,	in	Macbeth
Portia,	in	Merchant of Venice
Nerissa,	in	" "
Beatrice,	in	Much Ado about Nothing
Rosalind,	in	As You Like It
Viola,	in	Twelfth Night
Mrs. Ford,	in	Merry Wives of Windsor
Zara,	in	The Mourning Bride
Lothario,	in	The Fair Penitent
Calista,	in	" " "
Jane Shore,	in	Jane Shore
Alicia,	in	" "
Lady Jane Grey,	in	Lady Jane Grey
Arpasia,	in	Tamerlane
Penelope.	in	Ulysses
Andromache,	in	The Distressed Mother
Hermione,	in	" " "
Marcia,	in	Cato
Queen Mary,	in	Mary Queen of Scots
Lady Catherine Gordon,	in	Henry VII
Lady Randolph,	in	Douglas
Roxana,	in	Alexander
Jocasta,	in	Œdipus
Cleopatra,	in	All for Love
Palmira,	in	Mahomet
Phædre,	in	Phædre and Hippolitus
Monimia,	in	The Orphan
Sigismunda,	in	Tancred

Anne Bullen,	in	Virtue Betrayed
Queen Mary,	in	Albion's Queen
Almira,	in	The Mourning Bride
Angelica,	in	The Gamester
Sir Harry Wildair,	in	The Constant Couple
Lady Lurewell,	in	" " "
Sylvia,	in	The Recruiting Officer
Mrs. Sullen,	in	The Beaux' Stratagem
Cherry,	in	" " "
Lady Townly,	in	The Provoked Husband
Maria,	in	The Nonjuror
Lady Betty Modish,	in	The Careless Husband
Angelica,	in	Love for Love
Millamant,	in	The Way of the World
Lady Pliant,	in	The Double Dealer
Lady Touchwood,	in	" " "
Lætitia,	in	The Old Bachelor
Bellamante,	in	The Emperor of the Moon
Helena,	in	The Rover
Charlotte,	in	The Wedding Day
Phyllis,	in	The Conscious Lovers
Rosetta,	in	The Foundling
Mrs. Day,	in	The Committee
Ruth,	in	" "
Clarinda,	in	The Suspicious Husband
Lucetta,	in	" " "
Charlotte,	in	The Refusal
Berinthia,	in	The Relapse
Lætitia,	in	The Astrologer
Celia,	in	The Humorous Lieutenant
Elvira,	in	The Spanish Fryar
Violante,	in	The Wonder
Isabella,	in	The Fatal Marriage

Aura,	in	Country Lasses
Violante,	in	The Double Falsehood
Victoria,	in	The Fatal Marriage
Florella,	in	Greenwich Park
Lady Brute,	in	The Provoked Wife
Lady Fanciful,	in	" " "
Belinda,	in	" " "
Clarissa,	in	The Confederacy
Narcissa,	in	Love's Last Shift
Amanda,	in	" " "
Jacintha,	in	The Suspicious Husband
Elvira,	in	Love Makes a Man
Leonora,	in	Sir Courtly Nice
Estifania,	in	Rule a Wife and Have a Wife
Lady,	in	Comus
Aurelia,	in	The Twin Rivals
Florinel,	in	The Comical Lovers
Constantia,	in	The Gallants
Penelope,	in	The Lying Lover
Mrs. Conquest,	in	The Lady's Last Stake
Hypolita,	in	She Wou'd and She Wou'dn't
Flora,	in	" " " " "
Sulpitia,	in	Albumazar
Mariana,	in	The Miser
Aminta,	in	The Sea Voyage
Belinda,	in	The Artful Husband
Mrs. Loveit,	in	The Man of the Mode
Belinda,	in	" " " " "
Silvia,	in	Marry and Do Worse
Lady Rhadomont,	in	Fine Lady's Airs
Lady No,	in	London Cuckolds
Arabella,	in	" "

Lady Frail,	in	Love for Love
Angelica,	in	" " "
Nell,	in	The Way of the World
Clarinda,	in	The Double Gallant
Lady Dainty,	in	" " "
Lady Sadlife,	in	" " "
Oriana,	in	The Inconstant
Oriana,	in	The Fair Quaker of Deal
Widow Lackit,	in	" " " " "
Lady,	in	The Scornful Lady
Melantha,	in	The Frenchified Lady
Belvidera,	in	Venice Preserved
Adriana,	in	Comedy of Errors
Angelina,	in	Love Makes a Man
Queen Elizabeth,	in	Earl of Essex

In addition to the foregoing extraordinary list of characters, created or revived, by Margaret Woffington during her thirty years' career upon the stage she gave voice and life to a countless number of Prologues and Epilogues, a partial list of which is appended:

Epilogue spoken after her first appearance as *Portia.*

Prologue to "The Quacks," spoken on the occasion of her benefit and the *dèbut* of her sister.

Epilogue written by Garrick on the opening of Drury Lane, under his management.

Epilogue to "The Astrologer," written by Garrick for Mrs. Woffington.

Epilogue spoken in the character of a Female Volunteer.

Epilogue on Shakspere's Women's Characters, spoken after "Merchant of Venice," in 1744.

An Occasional Epilogue, spoken in men's clothes, after "The Gallants."

Epilogue spoken after "Three Weeks after Marriage," 1746.

Epilogue to "Hamlet," when Barry acted the part for the first time in London.

Epilogue to the "Refusal," 1747.

Epilogue to the "Artful Husband," addressed to the Young Gentlemen who call themselves "The Town." Spoken by Mrs. Woffington in men's clothes.

An Occasional Epilogue to "The Suspicious Husband," acted for the benefit of the Lying-in Hospital, 1755.

A New Epilogue, after playing *Roxana* in the "Rival Queens," 1756.

A New Epilogue to "Ulysses," in the character of *Penelope.*

MEMOIRS

Of the celebrated

Mrs. *WOFFINGTON*,

INTERSPERSED

With ſeveral THEATRICAL ANECDOTES;

The Amours of many Perſons of the Firſt Rank;

And ſome intereſting Characters drawn from real
LIFE.

———She was ſo charming,
Age budded at her Sight, and ſwell'd to Youth:
The holy Prieſts gaz'd on her when ſhe ſmil'd,
And with heav'd Hands, forgetting Gravity,
They bleſs'd her wanton Eyes. DRYDEN.

The SECOND EDITION, with ADDITIONS.

LONDON:

Printed for J. SWAN, M, DCC, LX.

FAC-SIMILE OF THE FIRST AND ONLY OTHER MEMOIR OF MRS. WOFFINGTON.

THIS IS THE SCURRILOUS PAMPHLET REFERRED TO IN THE APPENDIX.

II.

Woffington's Ghost.

AFTER the death of Woffington scurrility was active, and a pamphlet, pretending to relate scandalous events of her life, was published. Immortal Magdalen was not more hounded until she fell at the feet of the Saviour and found forgiveness, than was Margaret Woffington. Of course, she had defenders. Not always sincere defenders, however.* Her life had not been without blemish—but it was also full of deeds of goodness; and happily Providence holds the scales.

A broadside in verse was published in 1761, with the following inscription upon the title-page:

WOFFINGTON'S GHOST.

A Poem

In Answer to the Meretrician.

"—— The Queen of Love
Promiscuous blessings to her slaves assigned
And shewed the world that Beauty should be kind."

It pretended to be a defence of Woffington, but it was under that cover as scandalous in its way as anything published against her by open enemies. Starting out with the pretended purpose to defend its predestined victim, it opens:

"Ye awful shades of beauties long since dead
"Whose potent charms in chains have monarchs led
"Who, in times past, love's paths have freely trod
"Rise to revenge, and armed with terror's rod
"Forth from your mansions where you're doomed now come
"And from your followers' brows dispel this gloom
"This gloom which all Love's nymphs has quite o'erspread
"And heartfelt anguish in their looks are read
"Some scribbling wight to them & Love a foe
"In dark drawn colors from his envy's flow
"Has sullied some whose lives were pure as snow"

* *There was published in 1766, by one Bladon, a pamphlet entitled "A Dialogue in the Shades between Mrs. Woffington and Mrs. Cibber"—which was as scurrilous as any.*

The invocation is answered, for the rhymster goes on to picture how:

"—— A beauteous train
"Array'd with charms, immediate filled the plain
"When one stood forth & thus majestic spoke
"No more in vain shall British nymphs invoke"—etc.

The one who thus "stood forth" is supposed to be the Shade or Ghost of Woffington, who, after a preliminary lashing of the infamous pamphleteers who presumed to defame her and her sisterhood, proceeds in most execrable rhyme, in which "find" is made to mate with "joined," and "town" to mate with "known," etc., to besmirch—more scandalously than her traducer, in his preliminary stanzas had done with inuendo and most "damning excuses," Mrs. Bellamy, Anne Cately, Kitty Fisher, Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Abington—who had just come upon the London stage from Ireland, and a host more of her sisterhood. I shall not repeat the scurrilous screed, but turn upon the author some lines of his own, which he makes to issue from the lips of Woffington's Ghost. They are quite fitting to fellows of his stamp:

"Say, thou base, black defamer of the fair
"To what malicious devil art thou heir;
"Unconscious wretch! infernal infidel!
"Who but thyself such scandal dared to tell
"To propagate such vile, such daring lies
"At which your gloomy patron, Shame on't! cries
"No more your face in open daylight shew
"Doom'd to a dungeon's darkness, may you go
"May grief on grief, passion on passion roll
"And in the dreary torrent whelm your soul."

III.

A Monody

TO THE

MEMORY OF MARGARET WOFFINGTON,

BY

JOHN HOOLE.

"Flebelis indignos salve capillos,
Ah! nimis ex vero nunc tibi nomen exit."—OVID.

*** (As a fitting tribute to the memory of this brilliant woman Hoole's Monody is appended. Mr. Hoole was the translator of Tasso and the author of "Timanthes" and several other tragedies. Madame D'Arblay always refers to him in her writings as "the good Mr. Hoole.")

There fled the fair that all beholders charm'd,
Whose beauty fir'd and whose spirit warm'd.
In that sad sigh th' unwilling breath retir'd
The grace, the glory of our scene expir'd.
And shall she die, the Muses' rites unpaid,
No grateful lays to deck her parting shade,
While on her bier the sister Graces mourn,
And weeping Tragedy bedews her urn
While Comedy her cheerful vein foregoes
And learns to melt with unaccustom'd woes?

Accept (Oh once admir'd!) these artless lays,
Accept this mite of tributary praise.
Oh! could I paint thee with a master's hand,
And give thee all thy merits could demand,
These lines would flow with true poetic flame,
Bright as thine eyes and faultless as thy frame.
We mourned thy absence from the scene retir'd,
Each longing heart again thy charms desir'd;
Yet still, alas! we hoped again to view
Our wish, our pleasure, every joy in you!

A MONODY.

Again thy looks might grace the tragic rage,
Again thy spirit fill the comic stage—
But lo! disease hangs hov'ring o'er thy head,
Dire danger stalks around thy frighted bed.
Those starry eyes have lost each beamy ray
And ghastly sickness makes the Fair her prey!
Death shut the scene and all our hopes are o'er,
Those beauties now must glad the night no more.
Say ye, whose features' youthful lustre bloom,
Whose lips exhale Arabia's soft perfume—
Must every gift in silent dust be lost,
No more the wish of man or female breast?
Ah me! with time must every grace be fled—
She, once the pride of all our stage, is dead.
Closed are those eyes that every bosom fir'd,
Pale are those charms that every heart inspir'd
Where now the mien with majesty endued,
Which, oft surpriscd, a ravish'd audience viewed?

What forms too oft the tragic scene disgrace!
What tasteless airs the comic scene deface!
Though tuneful Cibber still the Muse sustains,
By nature fram'd to pour the moving strains:
Tho' from her eye each heartfelt passion breaks,
And more than music warbles when she speaks.
When shall we view again, like thine conjoin'd,
A form angelic and a piercing mind;
Alike in every mimic scene to steer
The grave, the gay, the lively and severe?
Thy judgment saw, thy taste each beauty caught,
No senseless parrot of the poet's thought.
Thy bosom well could heave with fancied woe
And from thy own, our tears were taught to flow.
Whene'er we view'd the Roman's sullied fame,
Thy beauty justified the hero's flame.
What heart must then but Anthony approve
And own the world was nobly lost for love!
What ears could hear in vain thy cause implor'd
When soothing arts appeas'd thy angry lord!
Each tender heart the rough Ventidius blam'd,
And Egypt gained the sigh Octavia claim'd.
Thy eloquence each hush'd attention drew
While Love usurped the tears to Virtue due.

A MONODY.

See Phaëdra rise majestic o'er the scene,
What raging pangs distract the hapless queen!
How does thy sense the poet's thought refine,
Beam through each word, and brighten every line!
What nerve, what vigor glows in every part
While classic lays appear with classic art!
Who now can bid the proud Roxana rise,
With love and anger sparkling in her eyes?
Who now shall bid her breast in fury glow,
With all the semblance of imperial woe,
While the big passion raging in her veins
Would hold the master of the world in chains—
But Alexander now forsakes our coast
And Ah! Roxana is forever lost!
Nor less thy pow'r, when rigid virtue fir'd,
The chaster bard and purer thoughts inspir'd.
What kneeling form appears, with steadfast eyes
Her bosom heaving with Devotion's sighs—
'Tis she! In thee we own the mournful scene,
The fair resemblance of a martyred queen.*
Here Guido's skill might mark thy speaking frame
And catch from thee the painter's magic flame!

Blest in each art, by nature form'd to please,
With beauty, sense, with elegance and ease;
Whose piercing genius studied all mankind,
All Shakspere opening to thy vigorous mind,
In every scene of comic humour known,
In sprightly sallies, wit was all thy own—
Whether you seemed the Cit's more humble wife
Or shone in *Townly's* higher sphere of life,
Alike thy spirit knew each turn of wit,
And gave new force to all the poet writ.

Nor was thy worth to public scenes confin'd,
Thou knewest all the noblest feelings of the mind.
Thy ears were ever open to distress,
Thy ready hand was ever stretched to bless,
Thy breast humane, for each unhappy felt,
Thy heart for others' sorrows prone to melt.
In vain did Envy point her scorpion sting,
In vain did Malice shake her blasting wing.

---

* *Lady Jane Grey.*

A MONODY.

Each generous breast disdain'd th' unpleasing tale
And cast o'er every fault Oblivion's veil,
Confessed thro' every fault thy deeds to shine
And owned the virtues of Compassion thine!
Saw mild Benevolence her wand disclose
And touch thy heart at ev'ry sufferer's woes;
Saw meek-eyed Charity thy steps attend
And guide thy hand the wretched to befriend.
Go, ask the breast that teems with mournful sighs,
Who wiped the sorrows from Affliction's eyes—
Go, ask the wretch in want and sickness laid,
Whose goodness brightened once Misfortune's shade!

Oh! Snatch me hence to some sequest'red scenes,
To arching grottoes and embow'ring greens,
Where scarce a ray can pierce the leafy shade,
Where scarce a footstep marks the dewy glade,
Where pale-hued Grief, her secret dwelling keeps,
Where the chill blood with lazy horror creeps,
Where awful Silence spreads her noiseless wing,
And Sorrow's harp may tune the dismal string—
Or rather lead my steps to distant plains
Where closing earth enfolds her last remains:
What time the moon displays her silver beam,
And groves and floods reflect the milder gleam:
When Contemplation broods with thoughts profound
And fairy visions haunt the sylvan ground.
Lo! Fancy now, on airy pinions spread
With scenes ideal hovers o'er my head.
I see—I see! more pleasing themes arise—
What mystic shadows flit before my eyes!
Imagination paints the sacred grove,
The place devote to poetry and love.
Here grateful poets hail the actors' name
And pay the rightful tribute to their fame;
Around their tomb, in generous sorrow mourn,
And twine the laurels o'er the favoured urn.

Me thinks I view the last sepulchral frame
That bears inscrib'd her much lamented name—
See! to my view the Drama's sons displayed!
What laurel'd phantoms crowd the awful shade!
First of the choir immortal, Shakespere stands,
Whose searching eye all nature's scene demands;
Bright in his look celestial spirit blooms
And Genius o'er him waves her eagle plumes.

A MONODY.

Next tender Southern, skill'd the soul to move,
And gentle Rowe who tunes the breast to love;
The witty Congreve near with sprightly mien;
And easy Farquhar with his lighter scene;
A numerous train of bards the shrine surround,
In tragic strains and comic love renown'd.
See on the tomb yon pensive form appear,
Heave the full sigh and drop the frequent tear:
The garments loose her throbbing bosom show,
Dispers'd in air her careless tresses flow;
Round her pale brow a mystic wreath is spread;
A gloomy cypress nods above her head.
See! while her hand a solemn lyre sustains
Her trembling fingers make the languid strains,
Soft to the touch the vocal strings reply
And tune the notes to answer every sigh.
She, child of grief! at human misery weeps,
At every death her dismal vigil keeps
But chief she mourns when fate's relentless doom
Gives wit and beauty victims to the tomb.
Her lyre their merits and their loss proclaim
(A mournful task!) and Elegy her name,
Now bending o'er the pile she vents her moan
And pours these sorrows on the senseless stone.

Ah! lost, forever lost the breath that warm'd,
The wit that ravish'd and the mien that charm'd,
Here sleeps, beneath, the fairest of the fair,
The Grace's darling and the Muse's care!
Who once could fix a thousand gazers' eyes,
Now cold and lifeless, unregarded lies!
Who once the soul in bonds of love detain'd
Now lies, alas! in stronger bonds restrain'd.
Pale death has rifled all her pleasing store,
And nature loath's a form so loved before.
Is there a fair whose features point the dart,
Charm the fix'd eye and fascinate the heart—
Behold! what soon disarms the childish sting
And plucks the wanton plume from Cupid's wing!
Then boast no longer wit's fallacious store,
The sweets of sprightly converse boast no more.
Those lips so fram'd to each persuasive art
No more shall touch the ear and win the heart.
Let Beauty here her transient blessing weigh;

A MONODY.

Let humbled Wit her pitying tribute pay;
Let female Grace vouchsafe the kindly tear—
Wit, Grace and Beauty once were centred here!
Ye sacred Bards who tuned the drama's lays,
Here pay your incense of distinguished praise.
She gave your scene with every grace to shine,
She gave new feeling to the nervous line,
Her beauties well supply'd each tragic lore
And showed those charms your muse but feign'd before!
Here, round her shrine, your votive wreaths bestow,
Around her shrine eternal greens shall grow.
The listening groves shall learn her name to sing
And zephyrs waft it on their downy wing,
Till every shade these doleful sounds return
And every gale in sullen dirges mourn!
The mourner ends with sighs; her hand she rears
And with her vesture dries her gushing tears.
Behold! each bard the soft contagion feels,
From every eye the trickling sorrows steals.
See nature's son lament her hapless doom—
See Shakspere bending o'er his favorite's tomb!
Each shadow-form declines his awful head,
And scatters roses on the funeral bed.
In slow procession round the shrine they move
And chant her praises through the tuneful grove.

* * * * * * *

---

* *The concluding lines have been given elsewhere in this book.*

For the BENEFIT

Of Mrs. WOFFINGTON.

AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL in *Covent-Garden*,

On THURSDAY next, being the 24th of *March*,

Will be preſented a TRAGEDY, call'd

The FAIR PENITENT.

Lothario by Mrs. WOFFINGTON,

Being the Firſt Time of Her Appearing in that Character,

Horatio by Mr. BARRY,

Sciolto by Mr. SPARKS,

Altamont by Mr. DYER,

Roſſano by Mr. ANDERSON, *Meſſenger* by Mr. HOLTOM,

Lavinia by Mrs. ELMY,

Lucilla by Miſs CONDILL,

Caliſta by Mrs. GREGORY.

With *SINGING*

By Mrs. CHAMBERS,

And *DANCING*

By Mr. POITIER, Mad. CAPDEVILLE, *&c.*

To which will be added a *Comedy* of *Two Acts*, call'd

The FRENCHIFIED LADY

Never in *PARIS.*

Being the Laſt Time of performing IT.

The *Lady* by Mrs. WOFFINGTON.

Boxes 5*s.* Pit 3 *s.* Firſt Gallery 2 *s.* Upper Gallery 1*s.*

☞ TICKETS *to be had, and* PLACES *for the* BOXES *taken, of Mr.* CRUDGE, *at the Stage Door of the Theatre.*

WOFFINGTON'S LAST NEW PART.

FAC-SIMILE OF THE BILL OF THE PLAY FOR MARCH 24TH 1757.

IV.

INDEX.

A

Abel Drugger, 45
Abingdon, Mrs., 166
Ædipus, 101, 161
All for Love, 132, 161
All's Well that Ends Well, 31, 161
Anderson, Mr., 146
Anderson, Mary, 62
Andromache (*Distressed Mother*), 40, 83, 102, 104, 107, 115, 132, 133, 161
Anne Bullen (*Virtue Betrayed*), 89, 162
Anthony, 168
Antony (*All for Love*), 71
Apollo, 122
Arabia, 168
Argyle, Duke of, 120
Arpasia (*Tamerlane*), 89, 161
Ariel (*Tempest*), 70
Armida, 25
Arne, Dr., 43
Asia, 133
As You Like It, 146, 161
Aungier Street Theatre, 5, 6, 13, 14, 21–24, 38, 82, 113

B

Baddely, 85
Bancroft, 56
Barnum, 69
Barri, Madame du, 80
Barrington, 11, 15, 69, 102, 149, 151
Barry, Spranger, 71, 72, 74, 89, 90, 92, 93, 105, 135, 136, 137, 145, 164
Barry, Mrs. (*Mrs. Dancer*), 137
Bateman, Kate, 11
Bath, 54
Beatrice (*Much Ado*), 161
Beaux' Stratagem, 28, 68, 162
Beefsteak Club, 123–25, 127, 128, 131
Beggars' Opera, 10–12, 18, 23, 69, 160
Beggars' Wedding, 12
Behn, Mrs., 84
Bell, Hillary, 120
Bellamy, Mrs., 24
Bellamy, George Anne, 38, 67, 68, 82, 85–92, 95, 96, 98, 101, 135, 137, 166
Bellingham, Sir William, 81
Berkley Square, 156
Berry, 74, 75
Betterton, 33
Betty, Master, 11
Blake (*William Rufus*), 62

Bland, Mrs., 113–115, 117
Blandy, Miss, 120
Blind Quay, 13
Boaden, 2
Booth, Barton, 13, 33
Booth, Edwin, 83
Boswell, 51, 52, 66, 67, 79, 80, 99
Boutell, Mrs., 137
Bow Street, 47
Bridgewater, 25
British Museum, 120
Broderick, 7
Brooks, Mr. and Mrs., 39
Buckstone, J. B., 56
Bullock, 25
Burney, Fanny, 67, 78, 79, 80
Busiris, 6
Butler, Mrs., 30, 32

C

Cæsar, 119, 153
Cæsar, Colonel, 143, 144, 153
Cæsar, Sir Julius, 144
Calypso, 24
Campbell, Colonel John, 120
Careless Husband, 162
Caroline, Princess, 81
Cassell, 111
Cately, Anne, 166
Cato, 161
Cave, 34
Charles II, 84
Chetwood, 23, 26, 28, 109
Cholmondeley, Captain George, 77–79
Cholmondeley, Hon. Robert, 154
Cholmondeley, Lord, 77, 78, 80
Cholmondeley, Martin Horace, 154
Cholmondeley, Mrs. (*Mary Woffington*), 8, 9, 77–81, 139, 151, 154
Christies, 111
Cibber, Colley, 17, 28, 33, 39, 68, 69, 103, 113, 127, 156
Cibber, Mrs. Susanna Maria, 30, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44, 57, 60, 61, 72, 82, 89, 90–95, 103, 136, 165, 166, 168
Circe, 24
Clarke, Charlotte, 17, 156
Clerkenwell, 34, 156
Clive, Kitty, 12, 28, 30, 31, 44, 46, 47, 57, 58, 62, 69–70, 72–74, 76, 82, 89, 90, 106, 122, 136
Cleopatra (*All for Love*), 46, 71, 85, 98, 115, 161
Coffey, Charles, 13, 21, 68
College Green, 6, 10, 41
Comedy of Errors, 164
Comical Lovers, 163
Comus, 83, 163
Congreve, 51, 56, 60, 103, 170
Conscious Lovers, 28, 60, 162
Constant Couple, 17, 26–28, 44, 60, 76, 94, 103, 162
Coriolanus, 84, 160
Cork, 57
Corsican Lovers, 39
Country Lasses, 26, 163
Covent Garden, 47, 52, 62, 69
Covent Garden Theatre, 21, 23–26, 30, 34, 44, 46, 47, 52, 57, 58, 61, 67, 68, 69, 70–72, 77, 82, 85, 86, 88–90, 92–94, 96, 125, 135, 136, 138, 146, 149, 151
Coventry, Earl of, 120
Coventry, Countess of, 120
Cross, Mr., 30
Cross, Mrs., 30
Crouch, 85
Crow, Mrs., 58
Crow Street Theatre, 113
Cunningham, 2
Cupid, 170
Cushman, Charlotte, 83

D

Dame, M., 9, 11, 105
Dame Street, 8
Damon and Phillida, 160
Dancer, Mrs., 137
D'Arblay, Madame, 49, 66, 67, 79, 167
Darnley, Lord, 62
Davenport, Jean, 11
Davies, Thomas, 10, 17, 23, 25, 27, 32, 39, 47, 49, 71, 73, 91, 98, 105, 106
Delane, 32, 58, 82
Devil to Pay, 12, 21, 68, 160
Dickens, Charles, 11
Digges (West), 128–132
Distressed Mother, 83, 103, 161
Dixey, Henry E., 139
Dobson, Austin, 111
Dodsley, 36
Doran, 17, 20, 49, 101
Dorset, Duke of, 124–127, 129, 131–134
Dorset, Duchess of, 133
Dorset Garden, 56
Dorset Street, 125, 128
Double Dealer, 103, 162
Double Gallant, 26, 164
Douglas, 145, 161
Downes (prompter), 26
Drew, John, 99
Drury Lane Theatre, 13, 23, 26, 28, 30–34, 36–38, 44–46, 52, 56–58, 60, 61, 66, 69, 70, 72, 75, 76, 82, 83, 87–90, 92, 98, 107, 116, 138, 136, 142, 143, 155, 164
Dryden, 161
Dublin, 2, 5–10, 13, 18, 19, 20–23, 25, 26, 34, 38–40, 42, 43, 52, 57, 65, 67, 69, 80, 89, 96, 99, 100, 112–120, 122, 123, 128, 129, 133–136, 149, 155
Dublin University (Trinity College), 10
Dumesnil, Madame, 52, 76
Duval, 39
Dyer, Michael, 15

E

Earl of Essex, 164
Eccard, 49, 110
Egypt, 168
Elrington, Francis, 6
Elrington, Ralph, 6
Elrington, Thomas, 6, 12, 14
Emperor of the Moon, 162
England, 10, 22, 28, 53, 66, 70, 76, 77, 104, 110, 120, 133, 145, 155
Estcourt, 26
Estifania (Ruie a Wife), 89, 163
Eurydice (Œdipus), 101, 136
Eve, 24, 156
Evelina, 80

F

Faber, John, 15
Fair Penitent, 72, 106, 161
Fair Quaker of Deal, 164
Falstaff (Henry IV), 74
Farquhar, 14, 25, 104, 170
Fatal Marriage, 28, 87, 163
Fawnes' Court, 6
Fay, Leontine, 11
Fielding, 47
Fine Lady's Airs, 163
Fisher, Kitty, 166
Fitz-Gerald, 50
Fleetwood, 34, 56–58, 60, 61
Foote, Samuel, 59, 70, 75, 99, 105, 137, 142, 143
Forbes, Captain, 140
Forrest, Edwin, 83
Fox, 85, 87
Frederick, Prince of Wales, 89
Frenchified Lady, 164

G

Garrick, David, 9, 16, 17, 23, 26, 27, 32–45, 47–53, 56–64, 68, 70–72, 75, 83, 87, 90, 92, 95, 98, 102, 104, 105, 112, 116, 121, 136, 137, 142–144, 164
Garrick Club, 9, 11, 49, 105, 110
Gay, 10, 13, 23, 46
Geneste, 25, 31, 32, 33, 59, 99
George's Avenue, 10
George's Lane, 8, 10
George's Lane Theatre, 10
George II, 109, 131
George III, 136
George's Place, 10
George's Street, 10
Germaine, Lord, 124
Giffard, 33
Giffard, Mrs., 58
Gilbert, Mrs., 11
Goldsmith, Oliver, 80
Goodman's Fields Theatre, 33, 58
Goodwood, 54
Gondeau, Madame, 146
Gordon, Jean, 120
Granville, Earl, 7
Great Britain, 39, 40
Green Room Scuffle, 75
Greenwich Park, 28, 163
Guido, 169
Guilca, 117
Gunning, Elizabeth, 119, 120
Gunning, Maria, 119, 120
Gunning, Mrs., 119
Gwynne, Nell, 2, 37, 155

H

Hale, 27
Hallam, 24, 25, 54
Hamilton, Duke of, 120
Hamilton, Duchess of, 120
Hamlet, 31, 32, 44, 45, 59, 136, 160, 164
Hampton, 62
Handel, 39
Harcourt, Earl of, 80
Harlequin Sorcerer, 116
Harpur, 33
Harrow, 139
Harvey, Francis, 110
Haslang, Comte, 86
Hayes, Katherine, 91
Haymarket Theatre, 22, 56, 59, 75, 99
Hebe, 24
Henry IV, 72, 74, 160, 161
Henry VI (Richard III), 44
Henry VII, 161
Henry VIII, 160
Hereford, 37
Hill, 31
Hippersley, 25
Hitchcock, 5, 6, 8, 11–14, 16, 25, 27, 29, 39, 66, 118, 132
Hobbes, 7
Hogarth, 15, 49, 110, 111
Hone, 111
Hoole, John, 157, 159, 167
Hoole's Monody, 159, 167
Horton, Mrs., 28
Humors of the Army, 70, 160
Humorous Lieutenant, 145, 162
Hutchinson, Squire Hartley, 7
Hutton, Lawrence, 69

I

Ierne, 113
Infant Phenomenon, 11
Ipswich, 33
Irish Sea, 97
Ireland, 7, 22, 39, 40, 42, 44, 47, 57, 58, 70, 71, 90, 104, 110, 112, 116, 123–126, 135, 166
Irving, Henry, 97, 139

J

Jackson, Michael, 15
James I, 144
Jane Shore, 2, 83, 94, 108, 115, 136, 161
Jeffries, Miss, 120
Jocasta (Œdipus), 101, 136, 161
Johnson, Ben, 30, 31
Johnson, Dr. Samuel, 34, 42, 51, 52, 72, 79, 80, 81, 98
Jones (Art Collection), 111
Jordan, Dora, 2, 113
Jove, 133
Juliet (Romeo and Juliet), 14
Julius Cæsar, 83, 160
Juno, 24

K

Kean, Charles, 83
Kembles, 15
Kemble, Roger, 82
Kendall, Mrs., 12
Killey, Mrs., 25
King, 88
King (All's Well), 31, 32
King John, 92, 93, 160
King Lear, 33, 71, 72, 137, 160
King Street, 52, 62
Knight, 52

L

Lacy, James, 61, 69, 70, 109
Lady Jane Grey, 89, 95, 161, 169
Lady's Last Stake, 163
Lamb, Charles, 110
Lander, Mrs. General, 11
Langa, 6
Langtry, Mrs., 85
Lansdowne, Lord, 111
L'Assomoir, 86
Latham, 110
Lavinia, 113
Leatherhead, 81
Lee Lewes, 6, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 66, 73, 75
Leicester House, 89
Lewis, James, 99
Liffey, The, 10, 38, 43
Lilliput, 12
Limerick, 57
London, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 15, 21, 22, 26, 29, 33, 34, 37, 38, 39, 44, 49, 58, 64, 67, 69, 72, 77, 78, 86, 89, 92, 96, 98, 100, 106, 110–112, 114, 116, 118, 134–136, 145, 153, 155, 164, 166
London Cuckolds, 163
Long Acre, 47
Long Branch, 62
Lonsdale (Gallery), 111
Lorne, Lord, 120
Love for Love, 60, 104, 164
Love Makes a Man, 54, 164
Love's Last Shift, 163
Lowden, Mr., 128, 134
Lydell, 33
Lying Lover, 163
Lyttleton, Lord, 84

M

Macbeth, 32, 102, 161
Macheath (*Beggars' Opera*), 11, 32, 149, 160
Mackaye, Steele, 59
Macklin, 9, 29, 30, 31, 33, 44, 47, 49, 50, 51, 52, 56–60, 62, 63, 65, 69, 72, 89, 105, 114, 143, 153
Macready, 83
Maeder, Clara Fisher, 11
Mahomet, 128, 161
Malcolm, Sarah, 91
Man of the Mode, 163
Mann, Horace, 78
Marry and Do Worse, 163
Martin, Betty, 11
Martin, Sir Thomas, 111
Mary, Queen of Scots, 161
Matthews, the Younger, 99
McArdell, James, 15
McCullough, 13
McKee, Thomas J., 9, 63, 143, 151
McSwiney, Owen, 54, 57, 116, 117, 126, 151
Meath, Earl of, 11
Measure for Measure, 70, 161
Merchant of Venice, 31, 72, 136, 161, 164
Mercier, 49, 110, 111
Merry Wives of Windsor, 44, 58, 83, 143, 161
Metham, Mr., 88
Mills, 30, 60
Mills, Mrs., 30, 60
Millimant (*Way of the World*), 102, 136, 162
Milton, 91, 108
Milward, 30, 31, 32
Minden, 148
Mock Doctor, 164
Molière, 103
Molloy, 3
Momus, 2
Moore, Tom, 4
Mossop, 13
Mourning Bride, 161
Mowatt, Mrs., 85
Much Ado About Nothing, 161
Murphy, 16, 39, 49, 50, 71, 98, 104

N

National Gallery, 111
Newgate, 120
New York, 11, 25, 33, 143
New York Lyceum, 59
Nonjuror, 69, 102, 104, 135, 162
Noseda, 58
Nossiter, Miss, 137

O

Octavia, 168
O'Keefe, 11, 42, 65
Old Bachelor, 28, 103, 162
Oldfield, Nance, 2, 66, 102, 106, 114, 115, 123, 157
O'Neill, Miss, 85
Ophelia (*Hamlet*), 13, 14, 44, 59, 136, 160
Orford, Lord, 7
Ormond Quay, 9
Orrery, Countess of, 115
Othello, 71, 150
Otway, 44, 68

P

Paris, 52, 62, 76, 77, 80, 136
Perry, 152
Phædra, 138, 161, 169
Phœbe, 110
Phœbus, 133
Pitt, Miss, 82
Pond, Arthur, 49, 111
Porter, Mrs., 115
Pretender, Young, 69
Pritchard, Mrs., 30, 42, 44, 47, 58, 72, 76, 82, 101, 103, 122, 136
Provoked Husband, 71, 114, 135, 136, 162
Provoked Wife, 31, 61, 163

Q

Queen Anne, 85
Queensberry, Duchess of, 87
Queen Elizabeth (Earl of Essex), 164
Queen Katherine (Henry VIII), 160
Queen Mab, 92
Queen's Square, 153
Quin, 13, 33, 39, 44, 58, 68, 72, 82, 84, 87–96, 139

R

Raftor, Kitty, 13, 46
Rainsford Street Theatre, 15
Ratcliffe Highway, 33, 69
Reade, Charles, 1
Recruiting Officer, 17, 20, 25, 42, 44, 96, 137, 161
Rehan, Ada, 98, 100
Reynolds, Sir Joshua, 24, 51, 80, 81, 120
Reynolds, Miss, 80
Rich, Christopher, 23, 24, 30, 61, 68, 82, 83, 87, 89–96, 116, 125, 126, 135–137, 139–142
Richard III, 33, 40, 44, 45, 59, 139, 145, 160
Richmond, 54
Ridout, Mrs., 30, 32
Rival Queens, 137, 164
Robinson, Sir Thomas, 54
Robinson, Master Thomas, 54
Rome, 110
Romeo and Juliet, 92
Roscius, 71, 72
Rosco, 25
Roxana (Rival Queens), 137, 161, 164, 169
Russell Street, 47
Rule a Wife and Have a Wife, 163
Ryan, 25, 58, 59, 63, 89, 93

S

Sackville, Lord, 124
Scotland, 15, 70
Scrub (Beaux' Stratagem), 68
Seine, The, 62
Semele, 127
Shakspere, 70, 164, 170, 172
Sheridan, Thomas, 58, 60, 67, 113, 114, 116, 121, 123–125, 127–133, 135, 136
Sheridan, Richard Brinsley, 79, 80, 113
She Would and She Wouldn't, 76, 136, 163
Shuter, 44, 140

Siddons, Mrs., 42, 47, 82, 132
Sigismunda (Tancred), 135, 161
Smith, J. Challoner, 110
Smock Alley Theatre, 5, 6, 12, 14, 22, 38, 40, 112, 113, 115, 117, 123–125, 128, 132–134
Southampton Street, 50, 51
Southern, 170
South Kensington, 111
Sparks, Isaac, 11, 15, 69, 2
Sparks, Luke, 15
Spanish Fryar, 28, 162
Statira (Rival Queens), 85, 137
Steele, 103
St. Giles, 48
St. James, 48
St. James Street, 110
St. John's Gate, 34
St. Paul's, 33, 69
Strand, 51, 139
Sumbel, Mrs., 85
Suspicious Husband, 89, 162, 164
Sussex, 54
Swift, Dean, 7

T

Tamerlane, 89, 101, 161
Taming of the Shrew, 92
Tancred, 161
Tasso, 167
Taylor, 9, 67, 78
Teddington, 10, 62, 64, 68, 81, 112, 135, 143, 149, 150, 151, 153, 158
Temple Bar, 33
Terry, Ellen, 12
Thackeray, William M., 2
Thackery, Dr., 139
Thames, The, 38, 43, 62
Theatre Royal, 5, 12, 15, 17, 22, 39, 40
The Artful Husband, 163–164
The Astrologer, 162, 164
The Busybody, 44
The Committee, 103, 162
The Confederacy, 140, 163
The Fatal Marriage, 162
The Foundling, 162
The Gallants, 163, 164
The Gamester, 28, 162
The Inconstant, 60, 164
The Miser, 94, 163
The Quacks, 164
The Refusal, 162, 164
The Rehearsal, 33, 58
The Relapse, 84
The Rover, 162
The Scornful Lady, 164
The Sea Voyage, 163
The Stratagem, 104
The Orphan, 44, 68, 161
The Wedding Day, 162
The Wonder, 137, 162
Thetis, 35
Thomson, 84, 160
Thrale, Mrs., 67, 79, 80
Three Weeks after Marriage, 164
Timanthes, 167
Todd, 25
Tom Jones, 47
Touchstone (As You Like It), 31
Troy, 133
Twelfth Night, 161
Twickenham, 62
Twin Rivals, 14, 160, 163
Tyrawley, Lord, 144

U

Ulysses, 161, 164

V

Vanbrugh, 56
Vauxhall, 120
Venice Preserved, 89, 164
Ventidius, 168
Venus, 24
Victor, B., 99, 103, 113, 115, 134
Village Opera, 160
Vincent, Mrs., 25, 146
Violante, Madame, 6, 7, 9–13, 15, 17, 22, 34, 50, 69, 70
Violette, Mademoiselle, 52, 112
Virgin Unmasked, 160
Virtue Betrayed, 162

W

Walker, 39, 42
Walpole, 7
Walpole, Horace, 47, 78, 80, 119, 144
Wallack, Lester, 99
Wallacks, 62
Ward, John, 15, 17
Ward, Miss, 2
Ward, Mrs., 82, 88
Ward, Sally, 82, 132
Ware, Mrs., 25
Way of the World, 162, 164
Wellclose Square, 69
Wesley, John, 149
Westminster, 33, 77, 153
Westminster Abbey, 69
Whitchal, Lord Chief Justice, 6
Wigall, 146
Wilkinson, Tate, 45, 85, 89, 91, 93, 94, 95, 99, 104, 116, 135, 138–143, 146, 156
Wilks, Robert, 26, 27, 103, 104
Wills, 47
Williams, Sir C. Hanbury, 34
Wilson, 49, 110
Woffington, John, 8, 10
Woffington, Mrs., 8, 9, 14, 65
Woffington, Mary, 8, 10, 66–68, 77, 78, 81, 149
Wood, 7
Woodward, 58, 92, 105, 136

Y

Yates, 58
York Buildings, 135, 139
Young Bevil (*Corsican Lovers*), 32, 39

Z

Zara (*The Mourning Bride*), 31, 115, 136, 161

ERRATA.

On page 58 for "causes celebre," read *causes celebres.*
On page 113 for "*Jerne's Plains,*" read *Ierne's Plains.*
On page 135 for "*Marcia,*" read *Maria.*

*** The complete title of Foote's farce, referred to upon pages 70 and 75, was "The Green-room Scuffle; or, Battle Royal between the Queen of Babylon and the Daughter of Darius."